Tech Anxiety
Missing Data – Police Crimes
Hate Lit in the Library?
Equal Access & Social Equity
Racism in Librarianship
Braverman Essays
Union Library Workers
& More
PL is in Transition

The editors of Progressive Librarian are examining the current state and future form of the Progressive Librarians Guild’s journal following the release of this issue. New times need fresh eyes and minds in every realm of life, and the same is true of Progressive Librarian which has been in publication for the last three decades. One more print issue will appear after this one. Guest edited by Tom Twiss, Jessa Lingel and Ethan Pullman, issue #48 will focus on the struggles of Palestinian libraries, archives, education and cultural institutions. That said, when a new direction has been determined, we will inform our members and post an update to our website at progressivelibrariansguild.org. In the meantime, stay connected with PLG on Twitter @PLGCordCom and in our Facebook group, Progressive Librarians Guild.

Be sure to keep abreast of the ideas, analysis, and narratives coming from those who keep a critical eye on librarianship. Venues for critical views within the profession can be found at: In the Library With a Lead Pipe; Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies; and Journal of Radical Librarianship.

As always, we thank our members and readers for their support and dedication to progressive and critical librarianship.
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February 15, 2019
Editorial

by Elaine Harger

“I don’t want your hope.” Greta Thunberg

“The role of journalism is to monitor any center of Power.” Amira Hass

“In my ideal world, we would sit down together and talk through all of these things.” Adrienne Maree Brown

For 30 years this journal has questioned basic tenets of mainstream librarianship, from neutrality to a jump-on-the-bandwagon approach to new technologies. Progressive Librarian serves as a forum for politically engaged library workers dedicated to the liberatory potential of this profession. That will not change. However, PL is in a period of transition. One more print issue will appear after this one. Guest edited by Tom Twiss, Jessa Lingel and Ethan Pullman, issue #48 will focus on the struggles of Palestinian libraries, archives, education and cultural institutions. After that a new group of PL editors will determine its future. In my last editorial, I am compelled to offer a sketch of what I think must be on the agenda of progressive, leftist, social justice-oriented library workers. I also want to offer thanks to those individuals with whom I’ve had the honor to work over the past three decades.

Climate Emergency and Global Pandemic

Life on tiny, beautifully blue planet Earth has fallen victim to that sector of human society that gorges itself by othering everyone and everything in pursuit of control. What is named the Sixth Extinction and, now, the Great Pause are underway. In the first instance, all the accumulated knowledge of our species stands as nothing in the face of widespread refusal to change. A refusal rooted in ignorance, fear, uncertainty, entitlement – depending on who one is. In the second instance, the global coronavirus shutdown offers proof that knowledge

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Keywords: climate change, climate emergency, community conversations, non-violence, transition, Progressive Librarian, Progressive Librarians Guild
can guide social action.

This past winter the continent of Australia was aflame. The koala bear replaced the polar bear as the face of not-so-cuddly death and extinction. We learned that one-quarter of the bird population in North America has died in the last 50 years due to habitat loss and pesticides. Pollinators are disappearing. Oxygen levels in parts of Earth’s oceans have dropped by 40-50%. Whales wash ashore, starved to death because the plastics filling their bellies supply no nourishment. Nanoplastics fall on the most remote mountaintops carried by snowflakes and raindrops. Plastic-rain – the new acid-rain.

And, now, the coronavirus, COVID-19, global pandemic and economic shutdown.

Libraries, schools, museums worldwide are shuttered to contain spread of the virus. Suddenly, for some, life shifted online – shopping, chatting, schooling, entertaining. Zoom soared. For others, already precarious lives teetered, collapsed – jobs and paychecks disappeared, social connections severed, services reduced or cut altogether. In some places care has emerged, in others police crackdowns are ordered.

After a month-and-a-half of this, everywhere a strong desire to return to normal. Back to work, to jostling friends in the hallways, to grocery store trips without facemasks.

Normality. But, what is normal? Normal, by whose definition? What if “normal” for some is COVID-like for others? What if normal is actually pathological?

In a New York Times op-ed piece, Rhiana Gunn-Wright, who helped craft the Green New Deal, addresses the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on poor communities and people of color, and the fact that the bulk of federal stimulus funds are earmarked for corporate returns-to-normal. She expresses outrage that no environmental initiatives were included and says of the pandemic’s impact on the economy that, “…we are watching a preview of the worst possible impacts of the climate crisis roll right before our eyes.”

Except, a hint of even worse rolled out a few days later when armed, right-wing protesters seized the steps of state capitol buildings demanding governors rescind stay-home orders, the sight of which inspired Trump to tweet “LIBERATE MINNESOTA.” Was the president actually suggesting an armed coup against elected state officials or simply engaging in a bombastic man-cave-like cheer usually reserved for sport teams?

And, a picture of even worse comes from India. In an April 3, Financial Times, essay, the writer Arundhati Roy tells of millions of migrant workers forced by stay-home orders to leave urban areas, walking for days to reach their villages, some dying along the way, then the living stopped at state borders by military forces, and told
to return to the refugee camps they’d just left. Describing horrors of suffering and of cruelty in “The Pandemic is a Portal,” Roy writes that the social and economic havoc wreaked by the pandemic

“…offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality.

Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.

We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through it lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.”

Librarianship has an opportunity to take up reimagining, rethinking, redoing within our broken communities. But we need a change in mindset first.

At the midwinter meeting of the American Library Association in January 2019, the Council passed a resolution adding sustainability as a core value of librarianship. Sustainability being carefully defined:

[ALA] Shall define sustainability using the “triple bottom line” conceptual framework: “To be truly sustainable, an organization or community must embody practices that are environmentally sound AND economically feasible AND socially equitable.”

The baggage that this framework carries dooms its intent. What is needed is *degrowth*, living with less and sharing more.

This editorial is not the place for an exploration of degrowth as an economic theory, but it most certainly is the place for suggested reading. Library workers must inform ourselves if we are to contribute to rethinking normal.

1972 Limits to Growth, by Donella H. Meadows et al.
1973 Small is Beautiful: a study of economics as if people mattered, by E. F. Schumacher
2005 Discussion Course on Voluntary Simplicity, from Northwest Earth Institute
2008 “Climate Change, Development and the Three-Day Week” by John Stutz
2019 “Against Advertising,” by Nicole Ashoff
2019 “Challenges for the degrowth transition: the debate about wellbeing,” by Milena Büchs and Max Koch.

Perhaps the portal Arundhati Roy suggests we take just might be a ray of hope that Greta Thunberg would accept.
Gratitude

After 30 years of helping put out *Progressive Librarian*, the last of the old-timers, I am stepping away from the editorial work so that the journal can become what the next generation wants and needs it to be.

First thanks must go to the authors whose work fills these pages. Each article represents the intellectual curiosity, critical analysis, and political commitment to social justice that our profession very much needs in these precarious times.

In this issue’s lead article, Carolin Huang writes that “the desperation librarians have to keep up with technological trends is intimately connected to the logic of our current economy.” Huang’s analysis of this anxiety echoes PLG’s commitment to be “actively engaged in social struggles against capitalism,” and if one considers the climate crisis, it becomes crystal clear that librarianship very much needs our voices. Alistair McPherson’s article on hate literature in the library continues in the vein of *PL*’s longstanding challenge to neutrality as a professional standard, and serves as timely support for those librarians now grappling with hate speech in the library. At a time when “data” is all the rage, Dana Lachenmayer’s article on how uncollected, unanalyzed, unreported data serves current, racist power structures highlights the need for vigilance in protecting people’s right to know. Heightened attention to mis- and disinformation and outright lies is a priority. Lily Rose Kosmicki’s compilation of thoughtful ways libraries provide services aimed at building social equity within their communities is inspiring. Steven Harris’s article will prove to be of help as librarianship grapples with the its role and responsibilities regarding restitution to the descendants of enslaved Africans. The two Braverman contest winning essays, by Alessandra Seiter and Yoonhee Lee, stand as proof that social justice percolates in the minds of LIS students today, maybe even in LIS curricula. Julian Jaravata’s interview with Shiraz Durrani highlights the importance of understanding and ongoing analysis of social class. As PLG’s statement of purpose puts it, we “recognize that libraries are sites where structures of injustice, exploitation, control, and oppression are nourished, normalized and perpetuated.” Without clear understanding of where the library sits in terms of class structures we cannot hope to be active agents of social justice change. And, true to that commitment, the annual compilation of entries from the Union Library Worker blog documents class dynamics at play in the workplace over the past two years. The two documents closing out the issue deal with racism

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* See PLG’s statement of purpose and commitments at http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/content/commitments.shtml
in librarianship – past and present. Lastly, Babak Zarin reviews my book, *Which Side Are You On?* What can I say, Babak? You clearly gave it a careful read, understood its purpose, and reviewed it to *inform*. An author can ask no more. Many thanks!

Next thanks go to Nathaniel Moore, Jennifer Williams, Holiday Vega and Alexis Tharp for the time, energy, intellect, and heart you put into PLG, the journal, website, book discussion group, and *forthcoming podcasts*! And, a grateful callout to David Lesniaski and his everchanging crew of LIS students for all those hidden organizational tasks of maintaining membership lists, bank account, mailing address, for stuffing envelopes with journals and hauling them off to the post office.

Finally, to the entire cast of past *Progressive Librarian* editors. It’s been an honor to work with each of you, and now a conundrum! How shall I list your names? By age? Years known? Alphabetically? By number of PLG, SRRT, ALA Council meetings we attended together? Number of drinks at conferences? By zipcode? Well, it’s come to this…a list by roughly how long we’ve served together as editors of this journal: Mark Rosenzweig, John Buschman, Henry Blanke, Kathleen de la Peña McCook, Peter McDonald, Lynn Anderson, Rory Litwin, Lincoln Cushing, Susan Maret, Katharine Phenix, Mike Matthews, Al Kagan, Tom Eland, Bill Stack, Melissa Riley, Eric Estep, Elliott Shore.

And, of course, deepest thanks to all you readers and contributors! PL couldn’t have existed without you! Love to all!

In solidarity,
Elaine Harger
Emerging Anxieties
Librarianship and Material Transformations in the Age of New Technology

by Carolin Huang

Following the Enlightenment period, librarianship has long been defined by the physical space, collections, and architecture of the library and the knowledge base, stewardship, and organizational prowess of the librarian (Lerner 125). However, the traditional roles of libraries and librarians are being challenged today with the shift from industrial to information capitalism in the West (Lankes 7; Buschman, Dismantling the Public Sphere 65; Lerner 200). The current direction of libraries is unknown, as the conventions for seeking, organizing, and producing information are affected by new technological mediations. Libraries are developing intelligent agents for reference services, automating circulation and lending, building electronic resources through commercial vendors, creating information commons and makerspaces, developing digital libraries, and buying more computerized technologies. It should be no surprise then that issues of technology-induced anxiety, stress, and fear dominate LIS literature. Yet, much of this literature centres the experience of the library user or worker, negating analysis of how anxiety pervades the entirety of the library institution and the relations within them. Solutions to technology-induced anxiety in the library setting are reduced to changes in professional responsibilities, such as conducting better training on technology use or developing better adaptive skills. Such a narrow analysis of the major economic transformations affecting librarianship demonstrates the urgent need to employ a political economy approach to LIS literature. Mosco defines a political economy approach as “the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the

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Keywords: political economy; anxiety; labor crisis; information technology; capitalism; innovation discourse; prosumer
production, distribution, and consumption of resources” (The Political Economy of Communication 2) and “the study of control and survival in social life” (3) more generally. This approach demonstrates more clearly the restructuring of information flow and the reconstruction of labour relations, enabled by our innovation economy, that threaten the institution of librarianship. Affective reactions to these threats cannot be isolated to the experience of the user/worker and their lack of knowledge on how to use new technologies, but must be related to larger structures of power that affect relationships of work, production and consumption. Thus, addressing such anxiety embodied by the library institution cannot consist of mere education on and practice with these technologies. Following an political economy approach, we need to get at the root of what is really an overarching economic anxiety relating to the survival of the institution. Is librarianship merely an appendage to the information economy? Are librarians becoming what Marx calls the “conscious linkages” between the “numerous mechanical and intellectual organs” of automation (692)? These questions, perhaps, better get at the core of the anxieties we experience, and the incredible stakes we face in librarianship.

Anxiety, Technology, & Libraries

LIS literature employs many terms to describe the uncertainty that users and workers face in the increasingly technological library setting: “technological anxiety” (Novek), “information anxiety” (Eklof; Katopol), “information overload” (Blummer and Kenton; Gorman; Hopkins), “technostress” (Bichteler; Kupersmith; Melchionda; Sami and Pangannaiah), “computer anxiety” (Sievert et al.), and “library anxiety” (Jiao et al.; Mellon; Onwuegbuzie). The prominence of these terms in LIS discourse draw attention to the general condition of anxiety librarianship. I do not plan to do an extensive literature review on these topics as this has already been done elsewhere (see Bawden and Robinson; Blumer and Kenton; Melchionda; Sami and Pangannaiah); instead, I want to emphasize the dominant epistemological approach to analyzing anxiety that pervades LIS literature. Many of these scholars set out to identify the source and effects of anxiety, and possible solutions to addressing anxiety faced by librarians and users. The major narratives that come up in this literature are how increased access and availability of information due to new technologies have cultivated feelings of anxiety, how the continuous invention of new softwares and technologies have fostered an urgency to keep up, and how increased instruction on information literacy and technology use can help quell these fears. For instance, Melchionda argues that librarians must adopt a proactive, open and flexible attitude to embracing new technologies to address their fear towards the Internet takeover (132-133). This
approach neglects to consider how the formation of affect is ascribed to sociopolitical structures of power (Ahmed 9). Through a political economy lens, anxiety is not simply a feeling that can be located within individuals that can be rid of through rational human behaviour, but must be regarded as a social condition that is currently embodied by librarianship. Williams’s theorization on *structures of feeling* is useful here to understand how anxiety exceeds the individual to become apart of something much larger – as “forming and formative processes” (128). It represents a “social experience which is still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (though rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies” (Williams 132). Thus, my analysis attempts to articulate some of the emerging formations of affect, entwined with the information economy.

Literature on the possible loss of the library profession, perhaps, comes closer to issues relating to labour and market transformations. Novek, Tracy and Hayashi relate the fear that librarians have towards technology to the deskilling of library labour and the replacement of jobs by automation. The purpose of their analysis on the deep uncertainty faced by librarians is not to eliminate such fears but build a stronger critique of the growth of information technologies as it relates to our current economy. Novek, in discussing the anxieties faced by academic librarians towards computer technologies, states that such feeling “makes the economic and social effects of information technology more personal to [them]” (20) and thus, can incite a more critical outlook of technology. Along similar expressions, Tracy and Hayashi demonstrate how some librarians recognize the detrimental consequences of information technologies on the library profession and “public service mission of the library” (66).

**Crisis of Librarianship**

The loss of librarianship’s commitment to the public to the desire to innovate and embrace new technologies under information capitalism is central to the work of Buschman. His work introduces a stronger political economy framework for looking at the intensification of feeling in the library setting. He argues that the crisis of librarianship is defined by its lack of recognition of the philosophical shifts happening in the field. He asserts that the uncritical adoption of new technologies furthers the dominance of information capitalism and the privatization of public libraries. As a result, market-oriented discourse now governs libraries and their work, while the public sphere, defined by Habermas as a place that encourages democratic participation and social dialogue outside corporate or state control, shrinks. In this
crisis, libraries struggle for survival, quantifying their worth in order to justify their existence. To subvert this crisis, Buschman claims that librarians must be willing to develop a solid, substantial foundation for the defense of librarianship, as libraries foster the discussion, communication, and investigation of contemporary issues, all practices that are key to democratic life (“Libraries and the Decline” 9-10). But can the technological anxieties faced by librarianship be absolved simply through the commitment to the public sphere?

A simple consideration of Nye’s technological sublime, tied to the formation of American exceptionalism (16), confirms the difficulty of separating technology from the intensification of feeling. The social construction of technology is dependent on the very sense of distance and awe experienced by the user/consumer. Mosco argues that cyberspace comes to exemplify the technological sublime today, as it is “praised for its epochal and transcendent characteristics and demonized for the depth of evil it can conjure” (The Digital Sublime 24). Given the impact of technology on affective formations, the task of subduing the condition of anxiety that preoccupies librarianship is thus much grander of a feat.

Both Frohmann and Popowich, in their readings of Buschman, are not convinced by Buschman’s succumbing to principles of democracy in maintaining the future public librarianship. Frohmann, on the one hand, wonders if the concept of democracy has been “sufficiently debased in our time” (80) so that it should be rejected as the beacon of hope defending libraries from our increasingly neoliberal economy. He notes that because the rhetoric of democracy is also central to capitalist market participation, Buschman’s argument to hold faith for democracy in maintaining the public in public librarianship is not sound. Democracy then becomes “a concept that refuses to stop skidding drunkenly across the discursive terrain” (Frohmann 82) and perhaps cannot serve as a solid foundation for future librarianship. Frohmann’s ultimate concern is with how Buschman ascribes so much conviction in democracy and the public sphere in their purest form, concepts that Frohmann believes are already corrupted by private interests; he notes, “to be intermeshed with commerce seems to amount in [Buschman’s] view to a thorough elimination of the possibility of progressive politics other than one based on appeals to universal — yet thoroughly American — “truths” about the essence of democracy, justice, and equality” (Frohmann 83). Ford and Mosco have already demonstrated that the divide between public and private is becoming less clear cut with the development of information and communication technologies. Mosco goes as far to assert that because processes of commodification penetrate the public sphere, there is no such thing as free space immune from state and private interests in our
contemporary society (The Political Economy of Communication 153).

From an explicitly political economy perspective, Popowich challenges Buschman’s defense of librarianship and extends Frohmann’s critique of professional values. Popowich argues that the crisis of librarianship goes beyond professional concerns and is deeply material, “expanded upwards into the subjective experiences of library workers, and downwards to the organization and discipline of library labour itself” (7). His concern with the material conditions of librarianship is exemplified in his question: “How does a crisis of librarianship intersect with wider crises in capitalism itself?” (Popowich 6). He looks how living labour, the manual work of librarians, has been going through real subsumption, the restructuring of labour by technology, to comply with the capitalist market. Through his analysis of restructuring processes that have affected labour relations, including shared cataloguing, resources via OCLC, library automation, data initiatives, and electronic resource vendors, he argues that librarianship is now structured to be complicit with market interests:

The double bind consists in this: that whether we try to resist or embrace technical innovation, we make ourselves more attractive to private capital. If we are slow to change, there is more profit to be reaped by our modernization; if we are at the cutting edge, then the profitability of our commodities is higher. Whether we try to dismantle professional power imbalances or we try to protect them, we end up further enmeshed in the logic of labour and competition. (Popowich 17)

He gets to the heart of the imprisonment of capitalism, and why the mere rejection of technology by librarians and reorientation of the professional duties of librarians cannot suffice. So unlike Buschman, who believes that the crisis of librarianship can be explained by a lack of praxis of foundational values, Popowich contends that the crisis stems from the material disruption in the relations and conditions of library work (Popowich 14).

Hence, the desperation librarians have to keep up with technological trends is intimately connected to the logic of our current economy. As an example, the February/March 2018 issue of Library Technology Report, an ALA publication that evaluates new technology products for libraries, focuses on “How to Stay on Top of Emerging Technology Trends for Libraries”. In the issue, King uses market-oriented language, such as “innovation cycles,” “consumer behaviour,” “job opportunities,” “trendsetters and trend watchers,” “tipping points,” and “upgrade,” to describe ways to keep up with new technologies (5). The enmeshment of librarianship into our innovation-centred economy is extremely clear in the language used. Such discourse affirms that librarianship is uncritically making its move from its traditional
claims of democracy to an orientation towards a corporate framework (Buschman, *Dismantling the Public Sphere* 16; Elmborg 341; Lofgren 29). The major guiding library organizations, ALA and IFLA, have demonstrated their dependency on technological innovation for some time with their long-established bodies devoted to the research, education, advancement of information technology: the Library and Information Technology Association of ALA and the Information Technology Section of IFLA. These bodies have come to represent the obligation of the library, under an endless state of technological development, to practices of capitalist consumption and production. Therefore, only by understanding the confluence of public institutions with the private market in the library’s restructuring for capital accumulation can we best fathom the shaky grounds and anxious feelings that have come to characterize librarianship (Popowich 17).

**Material Transformations**

If we read anxiety as an affective response to the an economic crisis that affects in librarianship, what are the material transformations to be fearful of in the library setting? As attention and resources are directed towards new technologies, library work, librarianship, information, and library users take on new meanings and relationships. Morris-Suzuki describes how the capitalist economy has shifted towards the making of new technologies, or more specifically softwares, that mechanize the process of work itself to increase the accumulation of capital (114). As a result, the body of the worker is separated from their knowledge, and such knowledge is turned into a commodity (Morris-Suzuki 113). This process explains the direction of librarianship towards innovation and new technologies, and the supplanting of living labour by dead labor in library work. Tracy and Hayashi discuss the impact of deskilling on library work with the introduction of ICT infrastructures. They argue that the professional status of librarians, and the value of library work are being threatened by new technologies (Tracy and Hayashi 66). The entirely different role that the labour of librarians assumes can be best described by Marx:

> Labour appears, rather, merely as a conscious organ, scattered among the individual living workers at numerous points of the mechanical system; subsumed under the total process of the machinery itself, as itself only a link in the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers, but rather in the living (active) machinery, which confronts his individual, insignificant doings as a mighty organism. (693)

Dyer-Witheford analyzes how this loss of worker control is worsened by the “futuristic accumulation” of contemporary information economy, where “capital . . . learn[s] to function, not while drawing
populations into production, as in primitive accumulation, but while ejecting them from it” (186). In this way, the library worker struggles for control, worth, and being more than a linkage between machines and flows of capitalist accumulation.

And as the very notion of library work, and librarians' relationship to work are transforming, the relationships between production and consumption, and library worker and user, are also transforming. Stevenson, in her reading of *Third Generation Public Libraries: Visionary Thinking and Service Development in Public Libraries (to 2020) and Potential Application in Ontario*, concludes that the planning document centres on the role of the library user as producer and consumer and completely neglects the role of the librarian in future libraries (193). She notes that one part of the report that does make mention of the librarian is a statistic about the decline of library workers by 200 percent since the early 1990s (Stevenson 195). Critically analyzing the shifting role of the library user, she identifies the relationship between the expenditure of free labour by library users, in contributing to the design of library services and the physical space, and the making of library users into prosumer commodities. These economic shifts take a much grander scale when Stevenson notes how libraries in Canada have become market-oriented showcases for new technology (194). The institution of the library itself, in this case, takes on a new form and purpose. Affected by the economies of information, knowledge, technology and cyberspace beyond the library setting, the material transformations happening to librarianship, as an institution, space, and practice, are incredibly drastic, multifaceted and disorienting.

**Conclusion**

The intensification of feeling in librarianship, thus, is rooted in socio-political transformations that extend beyond the profession and yet dramatically affect traditional library relations and roles. Deskilling and the decline of living labour threatens the more radical potential of librarianship, as librarians become merely the connection between the exploitative, capitalist exchanges in the information economy, “dividing the planet into high- and low-wage zones” (Dyer-Witheford 186). If the condition of anxiety in librarianship is rooted in our economic system, any solution that remains within the confines of the profession will be fruitless. As Popowich asserts, the crisis of librarianship can only be resolved when we “fundamentally change the way labour, production, and social life are organized” (17) and “deal with the commodity question” (18). The deeply personal anxiety felt around technology, persistent throughout LIS literature, must be regarded as a social phenomenon that speaks volumes about the effects of our technology-driven economy. Perhaps then, the answer
is not to absolve librarianship from the affective force of anxiety but let such force guide us in navigating and dismantling the technology-driven economy itself. As many have argued, we are at a critical point in shaping the future of libraries.

Works Cited


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Does Hate Literature Belong in the American Library?

By Alastair McPherson

There are two clear issues when considering whether or not hate literature belongs in American libraries: what are the official policies currently being upheld and do they still make sense in today’s world—are they morally justifiable? We begin with an analysis of the American Library Association’s (ALA) many guidelines on the subject as it is these protocols which the American librarian would be following. These guidelines clearly state that hate literature is both allowed and encouraged as belonging in a library setting. Throughout the essay, the use of “hate literature” or “hate speech” is defined as speech or literature “with the sense ‘characterized by hate; intended or aiming to stir up hate.’”¹ Under this definition “The white nationalist manifesto” by Greg Johnson and “The Big Picture” by Billy Roper would count as hate literature, as they are written for the express reason of aiming to stir up hate; they are purposely racist against Jewish people and African Americans as that is their intention. Books which were written some time ago, and as a result have characters which could now be seen as problematic, works like “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” or “The Secret Garden,” and even “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” would not be under this definition, as they were never designed to foster hatred.

The ALA for their part have been absolutely clear on this issue, the organization states that since the First Amendment protects speech no matter how offensive the content is, so must we as librarians. But the organization also makes clear that the First Amendment does

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not tolerate either targeted harassment or threat, “or that creates a pervasive hostile environment.” According to the ALA then, the mere presence of hate speech in a library is not enough to create a “pervasively hostile environment,” nor “targeted harassment,” stating that merely “bigoted speech,” the kind found in hate literature does not rise to the level either of targeting harassment or creating a hostile environment, and that determining when it does is a legal question which needs to be examined on a case by case basis. The Library Bill of Rights states the ALA’s position, the first precept saying in its entirety, “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.” While I understand that libraries are a special case which can not easily be compared to any other organization, I wonder whether we would accept these kinds of answers from other institutions; if Walmart had a section specifically for Neo-Nazis, would we welcome answers like “we don’t feel this creates a hostile environment,” or “nobody is forcing you to check out any of these items,” if your local university offered teaching materials saying that homosexuality was unnatural would anybody be satisfied with answers that center around the university providing this material in order for the “interest, information and enlightenment” of their students?

The second precept of the Library Bill of Rights in its entirety is the following “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.” The objections to this are pretty clear, one can not possibly present “all points of view” on any topic as a library has a finite amount of space, instead librarians attempt to show a range of views. But where does the belief that all points of view are equally valid come from? If we take Holocaust denial literature as an example, the notion that the Holocaust didn’t occur is not “an interesting point of view,” it is a lie and were we sitting behind a reference desk we would have no hesitation in calling it so, why at one part of the library is the truth upheld, yet on the shelves it is not? If a decision was made in a library meeting not to allow Holocaust denialism, could an opponent to this motion really point to the second precept that “Materials should not be proscribed or

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removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval,” as a reason for its inclusion? The question “did the Holocaust occur” isn’t one of policy or doctrine, it is a question of fact, and the facts are clear. The question again then is, should Holocaust literature be placed alongside the testimonies of people who experienced the Holocaust? The answer, perhaps shockingly to some is ‘yes, we should.’ Allison Lewis in the introduction to “Questioning Library Neutrality, essays from Progressive Librarian” says about Neo-Nazi literature and Holocaust denial, “I would include some representation of [these] materials in an adult library collection, in order to understand their arguments and be better prepared to argue against them.” 4 Similarly, Bossaller and Budd hold “controversial materials must be included, but so that by studying them an intelligent person might be better educated.” 5 Lewis says a little later however, that we should not understand this to mean that they deserve to be treated equally in all respects “creationist and Holocaust denial have been discredited by the vast majority of scientists and historians, respectively. They don’t hold equal weight in the marketplace of ideas, and they are not deserving of an equal share of limited library resources.” They are correct in that it would be a strange idea indeed if in the section of the library devoted to the British Royal Family, we were duty bound to house an equal number of David Icke books, which contain assertions that they are in fact shape shifting reptilians.

Is the ALA’s solution to hate speech, therefore, simply to give it a space in the library, but surround it with books in which the scientific facts of the matter are located? The idea that theories like “race realism” can be defeated by surrounding these ideas with the current scientific consensus on race seems to imply that people with ideas not based in fact, can be reasoned out of them with the appropriate amount of facts. This immediately seems suspect, and reminds one of the Jonathan Swift quote often repeated, that “Reasoning will never make a Man correct an ill Opinion, which by Reasoning he never acquired.” 6

After all, since there is so much factual information available about the Holocaust, from testimonies, to photographs, to the fact that six million Jews and others appear to have disappeared, to the fact that in the Nuremberg trials not one Nazi officer went with the defense “the Holocaust never occured.” Why are there still Holocaust deniers

5 Bossaller, J., Budd J (2015). What We Talk about When We Talk about Free Speech. The Library Quarterly.
6 Swift J., (2011) A letter to a young gentleman, lately enter’d into holy orders: By a person of quality. It is certainly known, that the following treatise was writ in Ireland by ... Dr. Swift. United States: Nabu Press.
if a preponderance of factual data is all that is required for people to change their minds? Why would “race realism” exist if the only thing preventing “scientific racism” from existing is for its adherents to read some actual science?

To explain the problem with the rationale that simply surrounding hate literature, which by nature uses lies or the bending of truth to fit whatever theory it is trying to prove, on a shelf by literature which presents the actual scientific consensus on the issue can rectify the problem, I give the example of the famous 1979 experiment by Lord, Ross, and Lepper, in which people who supported capital punishment and those who did not were gathered and shown two conflicting studies, one which supported the deterrent effect of capital punishment and one that did not. The people who were in support of capital punishment found that the study supporting their previously held belief was more convincing and supportive, and those who did not found the contrary side more convincing. The reason being that the people simply took the confirming information at face value, while subjecting the evidence they did not agree with to critical evaluation, the authors stating “the result of exposing contending factions in a social dispute to an identical body of relevant empirical evidence may be not a narrowing of disagreement but rather an increase in polarization,” transposing these findings onto our present debate, the presence of hate literature in the library is apt to make people more polarized, and the presence of other, factually correct material may not matter as this information will not be seen as convincing. To see how far people will go in preserving their beliefs in the face of overwhelming physical data, it is illustrative to look at the example located in the work by Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken, and Stanley Schachter “When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group That Predicted the Destruction of the World” in it the authors profile a doomsday cult called “The Seekers” who believed that the world would end at midnight on December 20, 1954. When however they were greeted with the overwhelming evidence of the entire world still existing on December 21, the followers simply stated that their devotion and prayers had been enough to call off the incoming alien invention, thus keeping their theory intact. This is an example


of “motivated reasoning,” which we are all susceptible to, to give a further, non-apocalyptic example, the researchers Blanton and Gerrard asked college students to rate the risk of getting STDs from different individuals, after being given photos and personal histories, such as amount of sexual partners and contraception usage, instead of looking at the data and making reasoned responses the test subjects merely rated those who were more attractive as less likely to have STDs and came up with their own reasoning to fit.9

People however can only construct hypotheses with some evidentiary data, they seem not to be free to create hypotheses, no matter how convenient based on no data at all. In a study by Darley and Goss, one group of subjects was led to believe a child came from a high socioeconomic background, and another group, that they were from a low socioeconomic background, when asked about the child’s ability however both groups stated that the child’s ability would be at their grade level, however when given evidence consisting of a child taking an academic test, which was the same evidence for both parties, the subjects used that data, despite its insubstantial nature to back up their own prejudices, namely as evidence that the child from a low socioeconomic background was a poor student and conversely that the child from a high socioeconomic background was a good student.10 By supplying hate literature in a library then we are allowing people to use it to back up their own prejudices, people do not critically examine evidence if they agree with its conclusion, they use the evidence to further their beliefs no matter how baseless it is.

Not only will the researcher find the information that agrees with his preconceived ideas more convincing, this phenomenon being known as “confirmation bias,” or “myside bias,” but they most likely won’t look at the opposing evidence at all, Nickerson writing that “people tend to seek information that they consider supportive of favored hypotheses or existing beliefs,”11 in an experiment by P.C. Wason,12 people were asked to find a rule concerning the formation of three numbers, the subjects were given a string of numbers, and then they were asked to give the person conducting the experiment other three number strings and ask if they conformed to the rule.

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The result was that once the subject had formed a hypothesis for the rule, they tended to only test out hypotheses which would validate that rule, for example if the subject received the numbers “5, 10, 15,” they might guess the rule was “increasing by five each time,” and test hypotheses like “10, 15, 20,” or “30, 35, 40,” even though there are many rules which could easily cover all three suppositions, rules like “three positive numbers,” “numbers in increasing order,” or simply “three numbers under 50,” the subjects in short did not want to test whether their hypothesis was incorrect, they looked for positive cases, because they only wanted confirmatory evidence.

One writer trying to sum up the idea that those who are ill informed needed only be given the correct facts stated “fighting the ill-informed with facts is like fighting a grease fire with water. It seems like it should work, but it’s actually going to make things worse.”13 In order to see if people who believed that there was a link between vaccines and autism would change their minds after being given the facts of the matter, an experiment was conducted in which people received either information about the lack of evidence of the link between MMR and autism, information about the dangers of the diseases prevented by the MMR, or a dramatic narrative about an infant who almost died of measles. It was found that “None of the interventions increased parental intent to vaccinate a future child,”14 even though data refuting the link between vaccines and autism had the effect that people believed the link between vaccines and autism less likely, it still made people want to vaccinate even less, images of children sick from preventable diseases made them more sure there was a link between the MMR and autism, and the narrative about an infant with a disease which would have been prevented by the MMR made them more sure there were serious effects from the vaccine. In short, the results of being given evidence that the MMR vaccine does not cause autism resulted in “increase[d] misperceptions or reduce[d] vaccination intention.”

The third and fourth precept of the Library Bill of Rights concern censorship, they are, in their entirety “III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.” and “IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of

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free expression and free access to ideas.” But is this really the case? Taking the first clause “libraries should challenge censorship,” does this apply to hate speech? Does the ALA vigorously defend hate speech in their libraries, it is certainly true that the Freedom to Read statement (discussed below) and the Library Bill of Rights apply to hate speech but looking at what actually gets challenged through the ALA’s list of most challenged books, almost all of them are books for young adults or children, that were deemed “inappropriate,” not hate speech proper,\(^\text{15}\) when racism is mentioned is usually concerns the author having racist portrayals of their characters, often owing to the fact these books were written some time ago, works like “Brave New World,” “To Kill a Mockingbird” or “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,” aren’t hate literature as we are defining it.

These two precepts III and IV of the Bill of Rights, paint a picture of the library as a bastion of completely free speech where anything can be said and where works containing anything are permitted, and this is not the case, both slander and libel are not allowed, and it is more than slightly concerning that speech which harms those already oppressed like African Americans and LGBTQ individuals, is allowed, but slander, libel and defamation, forms of speech which only attack those important enough to be written about is illegal. Libel is illegal because it is said to harm the party at whom the libel is directed and is inaccurate, but can not the same be said of hate literature? Pornography is also not allowed on library shelves, or indeed on library computers, the reason being obvious, that seeing someone browsing pornography is highly disturbing, but isn’t a library patron reading hate speech disturbing to the public, isn’t having hate speech available on the shelves disturbing?

Not only are certain works, pornography and libel, de facto banned from the library shelves, but the library is not the neutral institution that one might assume from reading the Library Bill of Rights, and neither should it be. Candise Branum states that since the function of a library is to bring information to the masses, it is inherently a political organization, freely bringing people information being “an inherent act of social and economic justice.”\(^\text{16}\) Branum notes that far from libraries attempting to show every view, only 5% of libraries made an effort to collect “alternative, independent, and dissident material”\(^\text{17}\) as said before, the reference desk does not

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practise this kind of neutrality, if scientific data is requested about the difference between the races (very little), the reference librarian would go to the actual scientific data, not the hate literature, in order to find the truth. Holding both hate literature and the actual scientific and historical data on the shelves is not a neutral position, in the words of Robert Jensen “to take no explicit position by claiming to be neutral is also a political choice,” and it is a choice which states that the truth is just as valid as a lie. If librarians do nothing about the existing social order, we are affirming that everything is okay, and that is a political stance, “we can’t pretend that by sitting still – by claiming to be neutral we can avoid accountability for our roles.”

Branum brings up another issue relevant to hate speech, that we simply can not ask people from marginalized groups to adopt a neutral point of view, “We cannot ask librarians of color to neutrally assist a patron in searching for information supporting Eugenics, just as we cannot as a queer librarian to be neutral on the subject of gay hate crimes. Oppressed groups do not have the option of neutrality.” It is oppressive of us to carry these materials, and it is oppressive of us to ask people from marginalized areas of society to aide in their own marginalization by directing people towards hate speech. The trouble with this top down approach of neutrality that the field takes is that it ignores the lives and experiences of those working within it.

And hate speech and hate literature do real harm, as Calvert notes “the use of racist expressions creates and maintains a social reality of racism that promotes the disparate treatment of minorities,” part of the reason therefore that American society leans towards white supremacy is because hate speech is tolerated, not just in common parlance, but in our institutions. If one hears again and again that others are inferior because of the color of their skin, that same skin color becomes “a badge of inferiority and justification for the denial of opportunity and equal treatment,” “Not only does the listener learn and internalize the messages contained in racial insults, these messages color our society’s institutions and are transmitted to succeeding generations,” similar arguments as to psychic harm were made following the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision,

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that segregation “generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.” Delgado noting that “The psychological responses to such stigmatization consist of feelings of humiliation, isolation, and self-hatred. Consequently, it is neither unusual nor abnormal for stigmatized individuals to feel ambivalent about their self-worth and identity.”

Cohen points out in “Psychological harm and free speech on campus” that it would be very convenient for the advocates of completely free speech if psychological harm did not exist, since “almost all of us recognise that the presence of harm is reason to consider limiting freedom,” my freedom to move my fist ends at someone else’s face. The author ties this argument in with John Stuart Mill’s argument when he wrote “that the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others,” the same argument was made earlier in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, (Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen), the civil rights document from the French Revolution which says “liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of the society the enjoyment of the same rights.” Since we have seen that hate literature does do harm to others, do we not have a moral responsibility to rid it from our shelves? In “On Liberty,” Mill separates the harm principle from the offense principle, stating that what should be restrained is harm, not offense, “Naked Lunch by John Burroughs,” or “Pink Flamingos, by John Waters” might offend you, but it is quite difficult to link this feeling of being offended to the physical harm we can see hate literature causes from the work of Calvert and Delgado.

In “When God Hates: How Liberal Guilt Lets the New Right Get Away with Murder” Jose Gabilondo defines the New Right,

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also known as the “Alt-Right,” the right wing movement formed as opposition to racial, religious and gender equality, stating that the new right have “warrants,” or justifications, the first being “that some kind of ideological equipoise exists (or should exist) between liberals and conservatives, and leftists have skewed the balance.” The New Right believes their views make them subjected to hostility comparable to racism, persecution and homophobia, and are as worthy of compassion and mercy as other marginalized groups facing oppression, when Umberto Eco defined fascism he stated that the adherents must feel oppressed by their enemies, “the followers must feel humiliated by the ostentatious wealth and force of their enemies.”

Gabilondo states that this lament is nothing more than “an Orwellian strategy to sack liberal values by aping liberal claims in a way that turns the clock back on liberal progress.” The idea that all ideas should be included sounds good to liberal ears, because it sounds similar to liberal ideas like “diversity,” and “pluralism,” that by including white nationalist literature, we are celebrating the diversity of ideas that make up society. Good echoes this stating that “any idea can be validated once attention is deflected from its claims and attached instead to some general truth or value that can be sanctimoniously affirmed.”

The notion that conservatives are not fairly represented in places of learning, such as libraries and academia, according to the author, is typically countered by those on the left of the political spectrum by pointing at conservatives or moderates in these fields as examples that they are wrong, or by arguing over definitions instead of attacking their entire argument. Why should we, in these fields, artificially prop up ideas that are deeply unpopular? A similar event occurred surrounding the work of Gerald Graff, who stated in a book that professors should “teach the conflict” surrounding an academic issue, so that students can see exactly how, in an academic setting, something goes from a hypothesis, to being broadly accepted in academic circles. The phrase “teach the conflict,” however, was seized by the religious right, who started using it to insinuate there was an academic conflict about evolution, which there is not, and now the conversation is about whether or not students should have the freedom to investigate both “equally valid” sides of the issue.

For those who wish to know more about exactly why the ALA

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is so immovable on the issue of hate speech, the 1953 “Freedom to read statement” gives a lot of expostulation. The key argument it makes as to why this position is held is the following “attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad.”29 The statement, therefore, rests on the assumption that in the free marketplace of ideas, people always gravitate towards the ideas which are considered “best.” We previously examined the science behind this issue, but we can also simply need to look at our own nation, the rise of hate groups in Europe, and present day Brazil to see that this viewpoint is not just unfounded, it is dangerously naive, Marvin Glass writing “we need not dwell on the horrors of German fascism except to remind ourselves that the propagation of racist ideology was a major contributing factor in the death of over fifty million human beings and there was little, if any, censorship of speech prior to Hitler taking power.”30 Free people, living in times free from censorship, freely choose leaders promising to commit heinous acts, like banning an entire religion from a country, or promising not to spare even a centimeter of the Amazon rainforest from destruction, they do not, after freely weighing the evidence “select the good and reject the bad” all of the time.

The Freedom to Read Statement then goes on to state that “It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.” As noted in the introduction, we should not mistake the ALA’s policy as something softer than it is. The ALA’s position is not that the library might contain hate speech — and while that is unfortunate, it is sanctioned under the First Amendment — their position is that the library should contain hate speech, in fact even the rating of a book is something that the ALA has spoken out about.31

By remaining neutral, the ALA is causing more harm than good. In talking about democracies, Plato said “The excess of liberty, whether in States or individuals, seems only to pass into excess

of slavery ... And so tyranny naturally arises out of democracy,”\footnote{Plato. (1993) \textit{Republic}. Harvard University Press.} encapsulated in this idea is what is known as “the paradox of tolerance,” if a society is tolerant of all ideas, it will be co-opted by people who do not wish for tolerance at all. Karl Popper defined the paradox of tolerance this way, “If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them,”\footnote{Popper, K. (2015) \textit{Open society and its enemies}. Routledge.} advising “We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant,” he stated that the answer to the paradox of tolerance is to demand for systems in which the principles of egalitarianism and protectionism are upheld, with regards to library selection, then, a library in which selection is based on the principles that all mankind is inherently equal.

Joseph Good opens his essay “The Hottest Place in Hell: The Crisis of Neutrality in Contemporary Librarianship,” by quoting Dante, who states that the angels who in the War in Heaven stood neither with the Devil, nor with God, were given their own space at the mouth of Hell, “They have no hope of death, and their blind life is so abject, that they are envious of every other lot.”\footnote{Dante, A. (1987) \textit{The Divine comedy}. Cambridge University Press.} In these times of political partisanship, of a huge increase in hate crime,\footnote{\textit{Crime in the United States} Retrieved from https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/publications#Hate-Crime%20Statistics.} including a massive spike after the 2016 Presidential election,\footnote{Gstatler, M. (2018) \textit{FBI: Hate crimes rose the day after Trump was elected}. Retrieved from https://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/379915-fbi-hate-crimes-rose-the-day-after-trump-was-elected.} that to both carry hate literature and literature containing the facts of the matter “smacks of moral relativism,” it negates our social responsibility, our responsibility to the communities we serve, and our own moral responsibility. It pretends that its actions communicate a neutral stance while forgetting that it is impossible to remain neutral on a moving train, for us to remain steady while society heads in a certain direction is an act in which we state that the current direction that we are moving in is one that we agree with. It is a position that lacks courage, it neglects critical thinking, it robs the librarian of their authority, and furthers societal prejudices. We would do well to remember the words of Desmond Tutu when he said “if you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and
you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.” History does not look kindly on people who look on passively while society subsides. The kind of library that the ALA argues for through its many guidelines is a library selling ideas stripped of their real world consequences, and is a position which leads the one to believe that the ALA earnestly believes that certain ideas have no consequences, or that if they do, that all consequences arising from these ideas must be treated as being equal, a world in which moral values are treated “as philosophical curiosities to be studied at arm’s length,”37 and in which the clear consequences of our actions are outside the scope of the profession.

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A Crime to Not Be Counted
An Examination & Exploration
of the U.S. Department of Justice’s
Data Collection Programs

by Dana Lachenmayer

“Because it’s murder by numbers, one, two, three.
It’s as easy to learn as your ABC’s…” – The Police

Introduction

In light of recent scrutiny of the U.S. Department of Justice’s data collection programs, policies and standards, administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), it has become unabashedly clear that more immediate movements towards comprehensive and veritable data collection need to be made within the criminal justice system. Specifically, the severely limited and insubstantial collection of instances deriving from use of force by police officers and arrest-related deaths, categorized as justifiable homicides, needs to be reexamined. Pressure from advocacy and activist groups, especially the Black Lives Matter movement, and media focus on racially charged, high profile homicides carried out by officers, beginning with the death of Michael Brown in 2014, have thrust this issue to the forefront. Reputable news publications, The Guardian and The Washington Post, have reacted by starting their own programs, based partially on crowdsourcing, collecting data on

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Keywords: Federal Depository Library Program; government information; government document librarians; criminal data collection policy; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Bureau of Justice Statistics; Black Lives Matter; The Counted
fatalities conducted by police officers in 2015 and 2016. This, in turn, has shown the blaring gaps in the FBI’s and the BJS’s ability to collect data of this nature, whose numbers amounted to less than half of what was documented by The Guardian in 2015.

The FBI’s program for collection of crime data across the nation, specifically regarding their Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), is voluntary and has been since its institution in the 1920s, with state and local agencies submitting data at their own discretion. The BJS’s Arrest-Related Death Program is a more recent endeavor, resulting from the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2000. This program’s sole focus is the collection of data regarding deaths resulting from a law enforcement officer or while in the care of a law enforcement agency. However, this is merely an incentive for state and local agencies to receive grant money. There is no formidable punishment for lack of data submission, being that demands for mandated reporting are still unrealized, which means that plenty is at risk of being hidden, such as systemic racism and corruption. How has this voluntary policy been allowed to exist for so long when public policy and state funding are directly informed by this data? In a nation conflicted by mercurial and repressive race relations since its birth, what kind of message is sent by these omissions in federal criminal justice policy? Both of these directives should help ensure and enshrine the quality of life of individuals living in this country, regardless of race, gender, sexuality or creed. However, these directives remain ineffectual without departmental or agency enforcement and a proper mandate for the data collection which informs them. And as such, the value of all citizens is undermined and not accounted for.

Furthermore, comprehensive and credible data, which is true to scale, is an essential resource for curbing the misinformation and propaganda spewed by authority figures and institutional bodies. An informed citizenry, including the media, is the very basis of a high functioning, representative democratic society and government. It is one of the many essential checks and balances built into the infrastructure of a democracy and rooted in the U.S. Constitution. When such blaring gaps in the data exist, the information that extends from it becomes skewed or biased, producing an inability to critically scrutinize, seek justice and effectively exercise and engage in the democratic process.

As champions of democratic ideals and keepers of information, libraries and librarians have a long history with government information in this country. As a nation born out of tyranny, seeking freedom from the opaque and unrepresentative government of its predecessor, the founders chose to fashion America with ideals dressed in knowledge and light. The U.S. Constitution, combined with subsequent acts and laws from 1795 to 1895, enshrine the distribution, printing and
free public access to government information for the benefit of its citizenry. The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) is a direct result of this line of thinking, designating libraries across the nation as retainers of government information, forever enmeshing libraries and democracy. While the 20th century, with the advent of the internet and the ever-increasing amount of born digital government information, has shifted the role of libraries and librarians in terms of government information, the advocating work of government document and reference librarians remains key in the collection and preservation of, as well as access to, government information by researchers, policy makers and the public today.

This paper takes a look at, and critically examines, the history of U.S. criminal data collection, through the lens of recent, racially charged current events. It relates the role of libraries and librarians to government information, highlighting them as pivotal players in the organization and preservation of, as well as access to such vital information in a democracy. And most importantly, it implores a need for more concrete data and policies by the U.S. Department of Justice, as this information or lack of it greatly affects society at large.

**Keeping America Informed**

“Keeping America Informed” is the Government Publishing Office’s (GPO) modern slogan. Since 1895, with the passage of the General Printing Act, it has provided free access to government publications with the help and support of libraries, through the FDLP. While historically this program was minimal at first, according to a 2009 report conducted by Ithaka S+R there are currently a little over 1,200 libraries, of the academic, state, public and law variety, working to distribute and provide government document services to the public through the FDLP. However, currently only tangible or print materials, which include items such as the printed word, maps and CD-ROMS, are distributed through this program. Many efforts, countless reports and proposed legislation, most notably the FDLP Modernization Act of 2018 (H.R. 5305), supported by the GPO, American Library Association, American Association of Law Libraries, and the Association of Research Libraries, have been made with the goal of bringing the FDLP into the modern, digital world. This act, unfortunately, did not come to fruition, placing information produced digitally in a realm akin to the American wild west, a time before laws governed. For today, 97% of just published government documents are produced in the digital realm, with 75% of these born digital documents existing exclusively in digital format. This shifts much of the burden of access, collection and therefore preservation to the GPO, since no official legislation has been produced to grant
libraries this responsibility. The GPO currently provides access through a content management system called FDsys, which is currently undergoing a metamorphosis and will exist only as govinfo (https://www.govinfo.gov/) beginning in December 2018.

Compounded with the issue of born digital government information is the fugitive document phenomenon. According to Title 44 of the U.S. Code, every single unconfidential document published or issued by an executive branch agency, such as the U.S. Department of Justice, should be provided to GPO and therefore the FDLP. However, a mixture of document classification rules, exempting documents based on national security concerns, such as scientific technical reports, maps or nautical charts, and budgetary loopholes provided by the 1980 Paperwork Reduction Act and the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130 have allowed executive agencies more independence in their printing practices. This means that, historically, a vast amount of information produced by executive agencies, has been published by the executive agency itself and not funneled through GPO, which does not have a monopoly on printing, despite Title 44 of the U.S. Code. This also signifies that this information is not channeled to libraries for future access and preservation, nor does it become a part of the bibliographic record. While GPO and FDLP libraries have done strenuous work to ensure that as many documents as possible are funneled through this system, including tracking down and obtaining these “fugitives,” these efforts have only become harder with the amount of born digital information being produced solely on executive agency websites. According to a 2016 proposal by ALA’s Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) on the importance of, and current issues concerning, the collection and preservation of government information, in 1996 roughly 50% of government documents were not properly funneled through the FDLP where they could be cataloged, indexed and accessed. The proposal goes on to iterate that while the percentage of government information that is currently being published directly on federal agency websites, bypassing print streams altogether and making them ‘fugitives’, is unknown, it “can be assumed to be higher than GPO’s 1996 estimate”. As stated in a 2012 GPO article, Document Discovery, keeping up with the trend of increased ‘fugitive’ documents is the GPO’s biggest problem. They use a variety of methods in order to combat this phenomenon the best they can, including web harvesting of federal agency websites by partnering with the Internet Archive and directly contacting agency publishers on a routine basis. Another method they rely heavily on is the help of federal depository librarians, specifically when it comes to “reaching Federal agency sources”. GPO has blatantly stated that they “could never single-handedly discover all Federal documents without” the assistance of
federal depository librarians. So while the collection of fugitive and digital information, including data, is not necessarily an aspect of traditional librarianship, it has become a vital aspect of government document librarianship and reference librarians working in federal depository libraries. Since these librarians understand the structure of our government and how information is produced as a result of its operations, they have become indispensable to GPO, researchers of government information, and the public at large. When one factors in the inability or lack of will to properly preserve this information in digital formats by the executive agencies, due to lack of technological skill, budgetary allowance, or a concrete apparatus for preservation, it means that there is a true and real risk of government information vanishing before it is safeguarded in an archive. Furthermore, access to information is also highly contingent on the politics, beliefs and motives of the governing administration, as we have recently witnessed through the dismantling of scientific information pertaining to global warming on the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) website, at the advent of the Trump Administration.

According to a January 2018 report conducted by the Environmental Governance & Data Initiative, entitled, “Changing the Digital Climate: How Climate Change Web Content is Being Censored Under the Trump Administration,” within the first year of the Trump Administration, the EPA, a component of the U.S. Department of the Interior, extinguished over 200 web pages full of vital information on climate change for state, local and tribal governments, as well as the entire Clean Power Plan website.

Despite the death of the FDLP Modernization Act of 2018 amidst efforts to see its creation and the difficulties of born digital executive agency material, no small effort has been made by librarians to try and safeguard this crucial, yet mercurial information. Several initiatives, such as the DataRefuge movement sparked at Penn University, the PEGI project, the LOCKSS-USDOCS system and the Internet Archive’s End of Term project have been made by libraries and government information professionals to archive information before it is lost. For example, the Internet Archive, in partnership with the Library of Congress and several prominent university libraries has archived webpages and the information contained within them, from over 6,000 government domains and approximately 10,000 official federal social media accounts. This equates to over 3.5 billion .gov URLs, including 45 million PDFs in their End of Term archive. Initiatives like these, paired with the day to day work of government document and reference librarians to hunt down fugitives, organize information, prevent technological decay, as well as the containment of expertise in how government information is produced and search strategies
regarding such information, so that it may be more discoverable, makes libraries and librarians pivotal players within the realm of government information, and therefore U.S. democracy at large.

A Brief Discussion of Racially Charged Current Events

With the intermingling work and history of libraries and government information in mind, the U.S. Department of Justice specifically has a long history of opaque and limiting information practices, most notably their criminal data collection policies and programs. In order to see this clearly, and to truly highlight how it is affecting society today, it is important to place this phenomenon within the context of recent racially charged current events.

The death of an unarmed, African-American teenager named Michael Brown by a white police officer named Darren Wilson on August 9, 2014, in Ferguson Missouri, was the first of many African-American deaths at the hands of white police officers in recent United States history. Following soon after were the deaths of Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old shot for holding a BB gun in Cleveland, Eric Garner, who died from suffocation resulting from a chokehold administered on suspicion of him hawking “cigarettes and cheap goods” in Staten Island, and Freddie Gray, a young man who died from a spinal cord injury, most likely resulting from severe police brutality, the only evidence being a cellphone video capturing Gray “being dragged screaming into a police transport van.” These are just a few of the individuals whose lives ended unjustly at the hands of law enforcement between 2014 and 2015. Nor was justice served after their deaths, with little to no punishment inflicted on the officers responsible. Amidst protests and rally cries in Baltimore, the officers involved in Freddie Gray’s death were acquitted of all charges, while Wilson, responsible for the death of Michael Brown, was “exonerated” of all “criminal wrongdoing.” Similarly, officer Daniel Pantaleo, responsible for the death of Eric Garner, was not indicted, while Timothy A. Loehmann, who shot Tamir Rice, was merely placed on “restrictive duty.” Events such as these fueled mass protests across the country, reigniting old scars, on the basis of race relations with law enforcement. A modern rally cry was forged through the powerful voices of the Black Lives Matter movement with the underlying assertion being that all lives should matter and be administered justice equally. All eyes turned to the justice system.

The death of Michael Brown, in particular, spurred an investigation of the Ferguson Police Department by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division on September 4, 2014. According to a report written at the conclusion of the investigation, “a pattern or practice of unlawful conduct within the Ferguson Police Department
that violates the First, Fourth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, and federal statutory law” was found. More specifically, the report notes that Ferguson’s “law enforcement practices are shaped by the City’s focus on revenue rather than by public safety needs.” Ferguson’s “own data establish clear racial disparities that adversely impact African Americans”, an example being that nearly “90% of documented force used by FPD officers was used against African Americans.” If data such as this is consistently submitted federally, through mandation, then cases of systemic racism may be unearthed and action taken before lives, such as Brown’s, are ended prematurely.

An executive summary report from July of 1999 entitled, Bridging Gaps in Police Crime Data, expresses that Missouri, where Ferguson is located, is one of seven states that didn’t provide Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data to the FBI from 1980 until the point at which this report was written. In fact, Missouri, is one of four states that had never complied with reporting UCR data. Some more recent figures, provided by NIBRS’s data table, Participation by State, 2015, shows that Alabama, the District of Columbia and Illinois all have only one agency contributing data through this system. Several other states only have a handful of agencies contributing. Missouri fairs better in 2015 than it has historically, administering data from fourteen agencies as opposed to zero; however, according to the BJS’s Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies, 2008, Missouri has 576 agencies under its jurisdiction. So, proportionally speaking, Missouri is still a far cry from comprehensive collection and issuance, powerfully inhibiting the ability for nationally aggregated data on crime to speak the truth.

In a speech at Georgetown University, given on February 12, 2015 by then FBI director, James Comey, these issues were directly addressed. After the events at Ferguson, he asked his staff to show him information concerning the racial makeup and breakdown of individuals who were shot by police officers in this country, specifically considering African-Americans. He went on to say that, “They couldn’t give it to me, and it wasn’t their fault”. This is due to the fact that demographic data pertaining to deaths at the hands of law enforcement officers is reported irregularly through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Because “reporting is voluntary, our data is incomplete and therefore, in the aggregate, unreliable”. Furthermore, Comey expressed that he could not discern “whether the Ferguson police shot one person a week, one a year, or one a century” according to the data the FBI had at their disposal. Comey believed that incomplete, incomprehensive and unverifiable data propagates mistrust in the system and that gaps in crime data do not produce sound decision making and policy, as they should.
News publication *The Guardian* was equally concerned by the misrepresentations culminating from unreliable crime data, prompting them to start a project called The Counted. The Counted is their attempt to accurately “count the number of people killed by police and other law enforcement agencies in the United States throughout 2015 and 2016, to monitor their demographics and to tell the stories of how they died.” The *Guardian* pools their data from “traditional reporting on police reports and witness statements, by monitoring regional news outlets, research groups and open-source reporting projects such as the websites Fatal Encounters and Killed by Police.” They also incorporate data through a crowdsourcing element, in which individuals can contribute information in several different ways. Individuals can contribute through email or social media, by clicking on the “Send us a tip” tab on The Counted’s webpage, confidentially through a “public PGP [Pretty Good Privacy] key”, or anonymously through a “SecureDrop system.” For 2015, The *Guardian* counted 1,146 homicides at the hands of law enforcement officers. In the FBI’s 2015 edition of their annual publication, *Crime in the United States*, they counted merely 442 “justifiable homicides” carried out by law enforcement. The FBI and the BJS define a “justifiable homicide”, which is also synonymous with “arrest-related death”, as all “deaths attributed to any use of force by law enforcement personnel acting in an official agency capacity”, any “death that occurs while decedent’s freedom to leave is restricted by a state or local law enforcement agency prior to, during, or following an arrest”, and any “death that occurs while confined in lockups or booking centers.”

What *The Guardian’s* data does is highlight the U.S. Justice Department’s inability or disinterest to produce data to scale with events happening in the field. According to a Congressional Research Service report entitled, *How Crime in the United States Is Measured*, crime data collected through Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) are used by Congress to inform public policy and apportion federal criminal justice funding to states and local law enforcement agencies. For instance, the 103rd Congress cited UCR and NCVS crime statistics when voicing a need for more policing officers in needed communities, while working to enact a bill calling for the creation of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which cemented the creation of the COPS program. Additionally, UCR crime data has been used in the justification of grant programs like the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program, established under the Violence Against Women and
Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005. This grant then utilizes UCR data to distribute federal funds to state governments for criminal justice programs and to local law enforcement agencies in need of supplement. As such, the misleading and inaccurate, official representation of these atrocities conveyed by federal crime data threatens the government’s ability to make public policy and provide state funding that accurately reflects reality.

An Exploration of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reports

In 1927, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) established the Committee on Uniform Crime Records to actualize a method for collecting statistics on crime. The IACP believed that a federal system of crime reporting would express local crimes more truly by placing them in context, which would in turn, alleviate some of the pressure media was placing on local jurisdictions, a result of some police departments “cooking the books” to reduce the amount of recorded crime. Shortly thereafter, in 1929, the IACP first published Uniform Crime Reporting, a “manual for police records and statistics, which included uniform definitions for law enforcement agencies to use when submitting data to IACP.” In 1930, Congress granted the Attorney General the power to collect crime data through 28 U.S.C. § 534 and UCR was placed under the jurisdiction and maintenance of the FBI from 1930, forward, specifically collecting data on reported incidents, most notably arrests. At its institution, UCR only collected data on seven different crimes: “felonious murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny/theft and auto theft.” Since then, the federal crime data collection program has continued to expand in many ways. Beginning in 1958, the FBI could finally aggregate data on a national level in order to identify national crime trends. Prior to 1958, there were not enough state and local law enforcement agencies submitting data to the FBI, due to its voluntary nature, so that the bureau could not reliably report crime rates at the national level. The inception and early history of criminal record keeping and data collection indicates that its voluntary nature has always been an issue, since the FBI was never given the power to mandate agencies to submit their data. However, at this point such momentous gaps in the data were not of “major consequence”, since its purpose was to present and analyze national and state criminal trends.

As racial tensions flared in the 1960’s and 70’s with the Civil Rights Movement, further efforts were made to collect a larger quantity and more acute crime data. In 1962, the UCR, began to collect data, where it could, with the Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR), on “the age, sex and race of murder victims, the weapon used, and the circumstances.
surrounding the offense.” In 1965, the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice was assembled by President Lyndon Johnson to examine the roots and nature of criminal activity in this country and to recommend new programs and policies that would help alleviate these crimes. At this point in time, UCR was the only mode of crime data collection in the country, which the committee recognized as having “several limitations.” After many years, three pilot studies and several iterations, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) was conceived to support UCR data, with the hopes of painting a more complete picture, and was finally placed under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The NCVS is the “primary source for information on the characteristics of criminal victimization” and “on the number and types of crime not reported to law enforcement.” After so much time and concentrated effort over the establishment of a single survey, one might think that it would cover a lot of statistical ground. However, it is only based on a tally of 50,000 households, meaning that it does not have the ability to provide detailed information on crime at the local or even state level, which at least the UCR can do.

The FBI does have certain methods and assurances for maintaining the quality of the data it does collect. The bureau makes Quality Assurance Reviews (QARS) available at the state level. QAR’s help “ensure that each state UCR program adheres to summary and incident-based reporting methods that are consistent with UCR standards”, which theoretically increases the uniformity of the crime data reported. In effect, QAR’s are a way of auditing the local and state information systems collecting agency data. However, QAR’s are also voluntary, meaning there is a gross lack of uniformity across states, in terms of who is contributing data at the federal level and who is checking the quality of their data before it is submitted. Once data is submitted by a state or local agency, which is carried out on a monthly basis, the Crime Statistics Management Unit (CSMU) is responsible for reviewing the data received in order to ensure that policy standards are being met through adherence to definitions and statistical methodologies. If this unit finds anomalies or inaccuracies in the data, they are responsible for reaching out to the submitting agencies in order to verify the anomalies or elicit corrections. The CSMU then serves as the “centralized repository” for nationally aggregated data belonging to the FBI. The Department of Justice utilizes both the NCVS and the UCR to measure the scale, complexion, character, and impact of crime in the United States. While in many ways these two modes of data collection complement each other, their voluntary nature and limited scope severely impede their ability to accurately reflect the truth.
The Future of U.S. Federal Criminal Justice Data Collection

Since 1929, two newer modes of criminal data collection, the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and the BJS's Arrest Related Deaths Program, reflect the future of federal data collection on crime. The FBI first presented NIBRS to the law enforcement community at a national UCR conference in the spring of 1988 and it was launched later that year. By this point NIBRS was already years in the making, the result of a joint study between the FBI and the BJS in which they scrutinized the UCR program in order to explicitly examine how it could be improved. Their study's concluding report, *Blueprint for the Future of the Uniform Crime Reporting Program*, was released in the spring of 1985. *Blueprint* recommended that agencies should have a reporting system based on incidents of crime, in addition to the reporting on arrests that UCR was already carrying out. The report also recommended that some agencies, in which corruption or inaccuracies were previously a problem, should submit incident-based criminal data for all offenses happening within their jurisdiction, while other agencies should only submit data limited to a specific set of crimes. Generally speaking, NIBRS extended the scope of criminal data collection and provided more granular and, therefore, more comprehensive data for the FBI to analyze and make use of. More specifically, data collection is not relegated to a specific number of categories, providing a truer assessment of reality. This also means, for example, that there is now the ability to link specific incidents or offenses to arrests made or not made, and distinctions can be discerned between crimes attempted and carried out. There was much excitement within the law enforcement community at the onset of NIBRS, however, it is now 2018 – 30 years later – and NIBRS has still not been completely actualized. In a recent message from present FBI director Christopher Wray, he stated that NIBRS was on track to be the national crime reporting standard by 2021, at which point it would replace the current and long standing UCR program. While these changes would help fill the data gaps, NIBRS has already been thirty years in the making without yet reaching a level of utilization on par with the UCR program and nothing in the literature notes that submission would be made mandatory.

The FBI has also recently developed an interactive visualization tool called Crime Data Explorer, which they consider part of a "broader effort to modernize the reporting" of national crime data. This tool is fueled by data from NIBRS and UCR, allowing users to download data by state, view national trends and communicate with their Application Programming Interface (API) for reported crime, which for all intents and purposes sounds useful. It is still a
work in progress, with a limited number of datasets, each varying on how current they are. The FBI is very up front about this through a disclaimer, conveying, “This site is under development, and will be updated periodically. Crime statistics data is subject to change.” However, no matter how much time and effort is spent adding more datasets or tweaking nuances, operationality and the visualization power of this tool, to a certain extent it will remain a highly unreliable tool until it is driven by accurate and truthful data. This would require a more acute effort towards criminal data collection. Furthermore, one can only responsibly consider this tool as problematic, maybe even damaging, in that the visualization aspect is geared towards making the information derived from this data more widely available and engaging to the public. While transparency and ability to engage with government information is most certainly what citizens of this country need from their government, what they are actually engaging with and ingesting is incomplete data and is, therefore, flawed. The FBI does make their methodology known, both through participation data tables and their associated Data Declaration statements, which essentially describe the limitations of a year’s datasets, based on agency contribution. For instance, the Data Declaration: Number of Agencies and Population Covered by Population Group, 2016 statement states that in 2016, 6,849 law enforcement agencies, which amounts to approximately 37 percent of eligible agencies participating in the UCR program, reported crime data through NIBRS. A percentage that only covers roughly 31 percent of the national population. The ability to root out this statement, if one even knows it might be helpful, does, however, require some digging, following a trail of links beginning at the “Downloads & Documentation” section of the Crime Data Explorer site, ultimately taking one back to the UCR section of the FBI’s website. One cannot expect the average user to reasonably locate this important contextual information. So that what most people will actually gain from use of this tool is a skewed and misleading vantage point on crime in this country. The technological and aesthetic engineering of data should not be prioritized over methodology and collection procedures to ensure accuracy and credibility of information, especially when public policy and funding are based on such. This would also be a prime example of an instance where a reference or government documents librarian would prove useful, as both skilled finders of information and well versed in properly contextualizing information and identifying biases, both a component of information literacy. They can therefore help individuals discern information for exactly what it is.

Mentioned previously, the BJS’s Arrest-Related Deaths (ARD) program is a direct development of the Death in Custody Reporting
Act of 2000. Activated in 2003, it expired in 2006. However, it was reauthorized in 2014 under the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013. It is by far the most modern attempt at criminal data collection, drawing on the open source methods The Guardian’s The Counted uses in order to collect its data. It is also specifically geared towards collecting data surrounding use of force and deaths occurring as a direct result of police actions. The reauthorized act of 2013 expands the original act, to “include mandatory data collection of custodial and arrest-related deaths from states receiving federal Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) funding and from federal law enforcement agencies” within these states. The law also “requires the Attorney General to adopt guidelines directing state compliance with the law”. Even though this act makes a very crucial aspect of criminal data collection mandatory, it is still, at this point in time, unrealized. As stated in the June 11, 2018 notice of the Federal Register, the Department of Justice intends to push back implementation of DCRA until 2020, which is five years after it was originally signed into law. And if they can delay it this long, at the expense of lives lost and accountability disregarded, there is no telling when it will actually come to fruition or just how much injustice will have been served during its omittance.

Just like the definition of justifiable homicide, the ARD program defines an arrest-related death as the result “from police use of force” or an event that “occurs while the decedent’s freedom to leave is restricted by a law enforcement agency.” BJS is calling this new approach, instituted in 2010, a “hybrid approach”, where their “methodology is designed to increase the reliability, validity, and comprehensiveness of the data collection.” With this method, ARD first reviews information sources open to the public, including media outlets, such as The Counted, and federal agency documents. During the second phase, they utilize more traditional methods, directly surveying medical examiner offices and law enforcement agencies for official information, corroborating the deaths previously discovered in phase one. This method has increased ARD program coverage to a all time peak of 69% in 2011, producing far more concrete results than the UCR program has ever managed to accomplish regarding this particular aspect of data collection. While the reporting of deaths under the custody of law enforcement officers is still not mandatory, the program’s incorporation of media and other open information sources has increased its success rate. These practices are also why The Counted has been deemed such a success.

Reverberating from the multitude of arrest-related deaths that happened between 2014 and 2015, members of the 114th Congress introduced several bills, attempting to curb unnecessary use of force and provide accountability for the behavior of law enforcement
officers. Most notable was the Police Reporting Information, Data, and Evidence (PRIDE) Act of 2015 (S.1476, H.R.3481). This act would have required data collection regarding all incidents where use of force resulted in a serious bodily injury or death and was enacted by a law enforcement agent, involving a civilian. Furthermore, the act would have required that detailed information such as an individual’s age, gender and ethnicity, the location, date and time of said incident, as well as the specific force enacted in the event, was accounted for. However, none of the use of force acts introduced in the 114th Congress made it to fruition. They all died in committee due to lack of support. So although there have been recent attempts at legislation requiring data collection and submission by law enforcement agencies, the current nature of criminal data collection remains voluntary, despite the effects that such damning current events have had on citizens and some lawmakers of this nation.

While the history of recent initiatives by the FBI’s NIBRS and the BJS’s ARD program suggests that they are at least aiming to enhance the U.S. Department of Justice’s ability to produce data to scale with reality, there is also evidence that current actions under the oversight of the Trump administration have taken previous efforts a step backwards. The FBI’s 2016 Crime in the United States report, the first issued under the Trump administration, incorporates roughly 70% fewer data tables than the 2015 version. Although it is typical for dataset inclusion to vary from year to year, based on law enforcement agencies ability to submit, reporting from the news publication, FiveThirtyEight, a source which bases their reporting on hard numbers and statistics, found that in 2016 the removals of vital data in the annual report did not pass through the Advisory Policy Board (APB). The APB, instituted in 1994, is a council comprised of 35 representatives from criminal justice and national security agencies or organizations from across the nation. These representatives are given the responsibility of reviewing policy, as well as technical and operational issues related to Criminal Justice Information Services Division programs, such as the annual Crime in the United States Report. The fact that the FBI did not follow appropriate, established procedure by bypassing APB review, conveys an awareness of wrongdoing, further problematizing the issue of criminal data collection through a lack of transparency. Much like climate change information, this factors into a much wider informational trend of the Trump administration, in that they began and continue to systematically dismantle information from federal agency websites, an extremely worrisome trend in a democratic society, which only further reduces the ability of citizens and lawmakers to properly fact check authority, make informed decisions in policymaking and within the larger democratic process.
Information professionals, especially those well versed in the ways and means of government, can help us spot these informational voids. When you know and observe through long experience what is and what should be, you also can be tuned into what is missing. It does not serve us, as citizenry, to operate and try to progress in the dark. Thomas J. Froehlich has said that, “In their finest hour information professionals are signs pointing towards truth(s)”. Government information in particular is messy, unorganized and often decentralized, making government document and reference librarians essential resources in a profession with deep-seated ties to the evolution of knowledge, social justice and democracy.

Conclusion

While representing the deaths of American lives accurately and comprehensively should have always been a goal of the U.S. Department of Justice, the advent of the internet, which allows data to be immediately accessible to researchers, and the fact that in recent history the allocation of federal funds is a direct result of UCR data makes this need ever more pressing. Up until the institution of the Arrest-Related Deaths program by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, only 3% of the United State’s 18,000 law enforcement agencies were complying with FBI data submission regarding incidents involving deaths at the hands of or in the custody of law enforcement. This caused David Klinger, a “former police officer and professor at the University of Missouri,” to declare that the “data is virtually useless”. While criminal data submission from local and state agencies, as a whole, has fared much better statistically, in 2005 reaching a success rate of nearly 98%, data collection in this realm is far from reaching an ideal state. In an ideal state, all lives will be accounted for officially, throughout every year, and therefore, all lives will matter in the eyes of the government.

A Note On Methodology:

I am of the belief that the bulk of one’s methodology lies in the citations themselves and the utilization thereof. In essence, they express the story of process, like breadcrumbs on a trail. Because this paper partially concerns itself with recent events it had to incorporate news articles from reputable sources in order to validate the current events. The Guardian is also the creator of The Counted, where the idea for this paper originally stems from. News articles were also valuable as links to official government sources, such as the Department of Justice’s report on the Ferguson Police Department, which may never have been found otherwise. Much time was spent perusing the FBI’s
website, looking at their various publications and guidelines. While much information is accessible there, it is not organized efficiently and one often has to go digging around for exactly what one is trying to unearth. Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports were extremely helpful in providing context and history, especially since much of the information found in them was nowhere to be found on the FBI’s site. CRS is a legislative branch agency, working with and as a subsection of the Library of Congress, meaning that many librarians are in their ranks, contributing to these heavily researched reports utilized by Congress. CRS reports also often led me to useful legislation, which I could then find the official record of elsewhere. Time was also spent sifting through sources that were interesting, but were not geared towards this paper, such as FBI Inspector General Reports. Other sources were found which were part of the bigger picture, concerning the issues in this paper, but were outside the scope of this paper. For example, reports and legislation specifically about where judicial punishment for law enforcement extends from concerning a breach of use of force.

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Equal Access as Social Equity
A Literature Review of Programming and Services in Public Libraries

by Lily Rose Kosmicki

In an increasingly stratified society, the central role of the public library is to provide equal access. Equal access comes from service-models that promote social equity and aim to alleviate a variety of social issues that are exacerbated by a lack of access to services. Contemporary society faces a variety of complex issues such as discrimination, hunger, substance abuse, poor health, inadequate education, unemployment, crime and homelessness. This literature review examines services, programs, and policies in public libraries that help meet the needs of vulnerable populations. A few examples include providing internet access, promoting digital inclusion, performing different types of reference services, progressive collection development policies and procedures, facilitating access to online resources and e-government, engaging in outreach efforts, creating opportunity through employment assistance, developing task forces, making space open and accessible and encouraging staff training. Incorporating such services, programs, and policies into any public library with the intention of benefiting the most vulnerable members of a community promotes equal access as a means to social equity.

The following literature review gives examples of contemporary public libraries in the United States that are using a lens of social equity to inform services, so that library advocates and employees have a source of information to inspire, design and implement their own programs and services to promote equal access as a means to social equity.

Equal access comes in many forms, which require definition. Beginning with equal access, this is the concept by which all library users are ensured that the librarian attempts to meet their information

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Keywords: social justice; homelessness; poverty; social equity; public libraries
needs. Next, digital inclusion refers to equal access to technology and the internet, plus efforts to bridge the digital divide. The digital divide is “access to computers or the skills to use them” (Whiteside, 2004, p. 53) and can be framed in terms of “information have” and “information have-nots” (Hersberger, 2002-2003). Reference services are the librarian’s research-based role in fulfilling information needs of library users. Collection development services are the library’s acquisition of materials in a variety of formats, including online resources, which are any relevant online materials, including e-government. E-government is the process by which digital communication and access occur between the government and its citizens. Outreach services are the library’s efforts in community building to reach users through partnerships and promotions. Programming refers to any recurring or one-time library sponsored, affiliated, or facilitated event that can take place inside the library or elsewhere and is intended to promote accessibility. Services are on-going, permanent, everyday functions of the library. Other factors that contribute to access and equity are the implementation of space, which is how the physical building and staff of the library are arranged; training, which is the enrichment and education of library staff, and task forces, which are working groups tasked with specific goals and outcomes in mind. While these library functions are not directly defined as social services, they facilitate and promote access that has the potential to contribute to greater social equity. Some may begrudge the idea that the library has a role in addressing social inequality and it is the duty of other institutions (the police, human or health services, nonprofits or religious organizations, etc.) to address social issues like homelessness, discrimination, substance abuse, etc., but this literature review intends to demonstrate that equal access is fundamental to the values and philosophy of the public library and proving equal access is part of promoting greater social equity.

Literature Review of the Basis for Social Equity in Library Programs or Services

Who are vulnerable populations?

Defining vulnerable populations is tricky. Vulnerable populations make up a diverse and occasionally overlapping contingents of library users. It is important not to generalize vulnerable populations based on categorization, even while the library must use generalized categories to develop targeted programming, for statistical purposes and to understand and engage with the community it serves.

Generalized programming and services that are inclusive and accessible to everyone are advantageous to the library and its community. Edwards, Robinson, & Unger (2013) suggest that libraries
serve the LGBTQIA population everyday and “are completely unaware of it, which is as it should be” (p. 179), but that libraries should still consider the role they play in the lives of community members. Programs directed at the community must be as diverse and broad as the community itself, and can be infused with a pluralism of identities and differences. Easy ways to incorporate diverse experiences into generalized programming include movie screenings, legal advice, children’s storytimes, reader’s advisory, parenting concerns, teen events and author visits (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 180-181). Additionally, Luo, Estreicher, Lee, and Thomas (2012) explain that social services in public libraries benefit a diverse range of people with a wide range of needs, including “recent immigrants, homeless populations, migrant workers, unemployed individuals and people with disabilities” (p. 75). Yet, those groups are not strict categories with a fixed set of needs. Even if a user is without a home or shelter, it doesn’t indicate all users experiencing homelessness have the same needs or experiences as that individual. Hersberger (2005) explains that “homeless” is a problematic term, because it is not a homogenous population and gives the example of homeless veterans having different information and service needs than homeless families. Each individual who comes to the library is a unique person with their own background and their own concerns and needs. For example, serving community members with disabilities requires special consideration, because disabilities can affect people of all ages and people with disabilities may belong to other marginalized populations (as is also the case with members of the LGBTQIA community) (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 182). In short, a library hoping to achieve greater social equity aims to infuse generalized and inclusive programming and services with openness to the potential and dynamic of each individual to address the specific needs of vulnerable populations.

Another consideration is addressed by Holt and Holt (2010), who warn of using blanket terminology to define the poor because it trivializes their experiences and it makes other facets of their identity inconsequential. Generalizations are insufficient when people with low-incomes fall into a variety of other categories as well, such as parents, grandparents, children, people with higher education degrees, people with lots of work experience, people with disabilities, people of every race and gender or sexuality, and people who experience mental health issues, may have addictions, may be overweight or undernourished, may have felonies, may have experienced violence, abuse or other traumas, etc. (Holt & Holt, 2010, p. 7). These various conditions will affect how patrons use the library and contributes to a professional ambiguity about serving those at an economical disadvantage. As Holt and Holt (2010) note, while the American
Library Association encourages service to the poor and promotes staff training to serve them, the Office of Literacy and Outreach Services complicates matters by including services to the poor and homeless along with its many other responsibilities, including services for adult literacy, bookmobiles, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people, incarcerated people and ex-offenders, older adults, people of color, people with disabilities, rural, native and tribal libraries and so on (p. 15). Holt and Holt (2010) explain these are all significant categories of services in and of themselves and while they sometimes overlap, sometimes they do not (p. 15). Overall, libraries successful at promoting social equity will treat each individual user in accordance with their unique needs, while providing a broad and generalized service-model accessible to all, which is a complex and nuanced goal, but can be done using many of the example programs and services detailed in this paper.

The purpose of outreach has also changed over time to make room for greater fluidity and pluralism. Orange and Osborne (2004) indicate that in 2004 there was a conceptual shift in outreach services, which moved from being about addressing the information needs of the underserved or unserved populations, to focusing on sustaining quality services for all groups at all times, everywhere (in other words, equity of access) (xi). This shift recognized the limitations of outreach as a policy model, in that applying definitions to specific categories of users often ended up segregating rather than integrating vulnerable populations in any community by excluding those services from “normal” library functions. This model of “otherness” failed to recognize the variability of the “regular library user” and their needs (Orange & Osborne, 2004, p. xiii). Outreach became more holistic and focused on equitable services, where sameness and difference were “no longer seen as mutually exclusive, but rather complementary” (Orange & Osborne, 2004, p. xiv). The idea that libraries may strive to serve all people, at all times, and for a variety of potential needs, is the philosophical ideal, but it is also a tension that is crucial to understanding the ways libraries can promote social equity and also the challenges in doing so.

What is social equity?
Social equity is about ensuring everyone is entitled to opportunities for life, rights, self-realization, and well-being. As defined by the 2017 Standing Panel on Equity and Governance of the National Academy of Public Administration, social equity is “The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; the fair, just, and equitable distribution of public services and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy”
(National Academy of Public Administration, 2017). Society has not yet achieved this ideal, but in the meantime some libraries strive to address and alleviate inequality and injustice. Social equity does not entail the elimination of diversity and variety of the human spectrum for the sake of equality. Rather, social equity is the goal of people who hope for a society with more humanity, where all people are ensured human rights and opportunity.

Why do libraries provide access to social services and, in some cases, services themselves, and how does that work relate to social equity and equal access?

Common social services provide those in need with food, shelter, or health care. While a library may not directly set out to provide those services, it inadvertently provides shelter and occasionally even food, and some available information and programs do promote health advice and education. Providing those social services is not the goal of the public library, even though the library can and does provide information and resources on how to access such services. It is important to note that even thought providing information is central to the traditional public library's mission, information is not the solution to a lack of resources. It can be dangerous to assume providing resources and internet access is a cure-all to the social ills of vulnerable populations. Hersberger's (2002-2003) study on homeless families explores the assumptions made by policy makers about the digital divide. Hersberger (2002-2003) explains that none of the homeless participants in her study answered in the affirmative when asked if they felt they were information poor. The lack of access to digital information does not seem to negatively affect the everyday lives of homeless parents, in part because they have more pressing needs such as access to food and shelter (Hersberger, 2002-2003). It is not a lack of information they suffer from, but a lack of resources, so libraries who want to promote social equity need to do more than just provide information. Homeless participants also consistently sought information from interpersonal resources rather than the internet. Given Hersberger's (2002-2003) findings, the library can go beyond its typical role in providing information by making a more meaningful social impact in the lives of those who value interpersonal resources more than access to the internet.

Rather than solely providing information or offering extensive and comprehensive social services, the library does manage to play a role in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable populations. The public library provides a “softer” form of a social service by providing equal access, which in turn builds community. Edwards, Robinson, and Unger (2013) explain that libraries create community by acting
as civic action centers, centers for sustainability, cultural reflections of the community, community centers for diverse populations, centers for the arts, as universities and as champions of youth (p. 6-21). Libraries sometimes target specific areas of need, such as education, health, food access, safety, employment, housing, family services and technology. Libraries can also contribute to creating more resilient cities. Holt (2013) argues that libraries invest in their communities through construction and employment, job-seeking services, English literacy, e-government, and helping the poor, which in turn helps create a resilient city that can recover from hardship and face challenging changes (p. 37, 47-49). While libraries may not directly provide food, shelter, water and healthcare, they can provide other human necessities such as a sense of community, safety, and access to knowledge and information.

Social services are considered needs-based services, which means institutions intending to serve the public must gauge community needs through a process of feedback from, discussion with, and observation of the community. When libraries are actively attempting to understand and participate in their communities, they can develop services tailored to meet community needs. Pateman and Vincent (2010) propose that needs-based services are universal, in that everyone has needs and those needs are different for each person; needs-based services also involve and engage the whole of the community (p. 118-119). If the public library is to serve the “whole of the community” with needs-based services, it must account for the most vulnerable members of a community and their needs, alongside keeping up with technology’s planned obsolescence, on-demand trends and the endless purchasing of ever-changing popular best sellers. So, while all libraries are subject to market forces and trends, simultaneously some libraries recognize their responsibility in fulfilling the needs of the most vulnerable community members, be it those who struggle to find housing, those who are new to the United States, those who are learning English as a second language, those who do not have adequate education, those who struggle with addiction or mental health issues, and so on.

Library and information sciences have had a slow and imperfect path to becoming more focused on social equity and adopting a framework of social justice, much like society itself. For most of their history libraries have developed hand-in-hand with private business interests. Melvil Dewey himself, namesake of the infamous Dewey decimal system, founded a private company, the Library Bureau, to sell libraries equipment and furniture. Many libraries in the United States were built by Andrew Carnegie, a steel magnate, who shaped some of the philosophical basis for libraries for generations, for better or worse. Such business-based relationships were not always in the
service of the communities libraries were in. Much of the static vision of libraries in the public imagination, as places of self-betterment, silence and oak furniture, are a result of these particular influences. Such ideas contribute to a status quo and conformity in contemporary libraries. More recent programs and services in some public library lean towards a more dynamic framework aligned with the aims of social justice, such as job-seeking assistance, literacy courses, children’s story time and computer classes, which are “social service activities designed to promote social inclusion and social equity” (Jaeger, Shilton, & Koepfler, 2016, p. 2). Progress has been made from the 19th and early 20th centuries and recent historical examples include librarianship’s participation in issues such as the civil rights movement, intellectual privacy, freedom of expression and challenging censorship (Jaeger, Shilton, & Koepfler, 2016, p. 2). No community has achieved a utopian state of perfect equality and engagement, so all libraries have their work cut out for them in attempting to alleviate social problems. This kind of aspirational service-model is ambitious and inevitably imperfect, as services only effectively serve those informed of and engaged in them.

While history, capitalism, and the library’s traditional role in solely providing information complicate contemporary efforts to promote social equity, it is important to not totally discount the role of information services, while recognizing their limits. Chatman’s (1999) work on “small worlds” and closed communities demonstrates the importance of marginalized and outsider groups having access to information, even if it isn’t guaranteed that information will be sought out. Chatman observed information seeking behaviors of female prisoners and noticed they live “in the round” (p. 213), meaning they disregard and deem irrelevant information from outside prison, because they have no agency over it. In turn, the prisoners develop cultural norms about information seeking, and instead rely on insider groups or individuals in the prison rather than seeking out useful or helpful information elsewhere, creating “information poverty” (Chatman, 1996, p. 197-198). Similar to Hersberger’s 2002-2003 findings, only information that is relevant to their immediate life and circumstances is deemed worthy (especially if its from an interpersonal source) and seeking outside information is not the standard norm of behavior in small world communities. Our relationships and social worlds greatly influence how we seek and understand information we receive.

In the age of “fake news” and information “bubbles,” Chatman’s work takes on new meaning, and emphasizes the public library’s role in combating information poverty. Buschman and Warner (2016) explain that in the current political climate, it is particularly important for librarians to define their work in terms of community, social justice
and social services (p. 10). The goal of the public library has always been to expand and encourage information seeking habits and information literacy, but to truly do so, Chatman suggests, the librarian must bridge the divide between the two worlds of insiders and outsiders in order to encourage information seeking behavior (Chatman, 1996, p. 197-198). Dialogue and access break down the division between institution and community to create a more integrated and dynamic public library which is constantly changing along with its community, and therefore becomes a part of the community, rather than an outside entity looking in. Holt and Holt (2010) suggest this kind of directed service is inherent in planning library services, but with the added responsibility of needs assessment (p. 100). By attempting to engage “the whole of the community” and meet all their members’ various needs, the library is taking on an ambitious task, but a worthwhile one.

How do social services in public libraries build healthy, strong communities?

Sinikka Sipilä (2015) defines a strong society as one in which individuals are actively participating in their community (p. 95). The role of the library in a strong society as defined by Sipilä (2015) is one that meets the information needs of its communities and is adequately serving the democratic ideal of “freedom of access to information for all” (p. 95). Examples of free and equal access include equal opportunity to lifelong learning, education, research, innovation, culture, and recreation. Edwards, Robinson, and Unger (2013) describe how public libraries contribute to democracy by supporting “not just a citizenry, but an informed citizenry” (p. 136). Social services provided in public libraries can and do promote free and equal access in each of those categories.

Not only do libraries try to support a strong society with democratic ideals, encouraging community connectedness and engagement, but some librarians themselves are actively involved in the political process. Jaeger, Taylor, and Gorham’s (2015a) work emphasize the important potential of librarians in promoting human rights and social justice by informing policymakers, government officials and researchers of the library’s role in promoting social equity. They explain that librarians serve as liaisons between the community and other public servants. This research also encourages librarians to be directly involved in the political process, because the librarian should bring the values of social equity into practice through real participation, action and change for social justice.

Libraries can also prevent social exclusion. Hoyer (2013) explains how social exclusion threatens the health of society by discriminating against people based on poverty in material and social ways (p. 57). By limiting access to services or the ability to participate in social
activities, institutions can create educational and cultural poverty and exclusion based on ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, physical or mental disability, education, employment and economic status (Hoyer, 2013, p. 57). Library staff are key in shaping that experience. Hersberger (2005) explains that information providers are either friends and advocates to users, or create feelings of unworthiness. She suggests that practitioners and LIS students should be encouraged to review ALA’s Policy on Library Services for the Poor (Policy 61 in the ALA Policy Manual) that states that “libraries should strive to remove existing barriers to service access and to improve services provided, taking into consideration the information and services needs of poor people” who “are marginalized populations already denied or struggling for full participation in a democratic society, ... [L]ibraries ought to be social institutions of inclusion, not exclusion” (Hersberger, 2005). The effects of such exclusion reduce the quality of life for those discriminated against, limit opportunity for prosperity and weaken the social cohesion of communities (Hoyer, 2013, p. 57). To combat social exclusion, Hoyer cites DeFaveri’s (2005) example of removing financial barrier for access, including rethinking fines for low-income individuals and making memberships available to people without fixed addresses (p. 59). The American Library Association’s Outreach Resources for Services to Poor and Homeless People recommends much the same, citing ways to promote access to the poor or homeless such as allowing those without a permanent address to get a card and eliminating fine restrictions (American Library Association, 2017).

At the same time “community” does not just refer to the physical boundaries of cities, districts, or towns, and while we’ve established that internet access doesn’t alleviate lack of resources, it does serve important social and connective functions. Since the public library provides free public internet, library users can connect to the online world, which is international in scope. Bertot, McClure, and Jaeger (2008) define internet access in terms of human rights, which is an idea that has traction outside the United States as well. For example, Jain and Saraf (2013) state that in India, internet access and the access to the information it provides are seen as a basic human right (p. 47). Internet access has the ability to connect people to others in their own community, but in the greater world community as well, which can be especially important to immigrants and refugees in the United States.

**Summary of Equal Access and Social Equity Programs and Services in Public Libraries**

The previous section established a philosophical basis for programs and services in term of information access and social equity. In the following section, I’d like to introduce some examples of libraries
across the United States and United Kingdom that are promoting social equity with specific programs, services, and efforts. Hopefully, readers will be inspired to advocate for similar access to social services in public libraries and engage these examples more deeply by developing ways to take these examples even further.

Collection development services
Luo et al. (2012) explain that collection development needs to be guided by community need. Responding to that need includes examples of multicultural staff, books, media, programming in multiple languages and programs that “increase accessibility of their collections and services to individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities” (p. 75). Ruhlmann (2014), as per American Library Association recommendations, suggests making collections inclusive of materials on poverty and homelessness as a way to cater to those in need. Developing particular collections aimed at those in need is a matter of access. Examples include:

• The Memphis-Shelby County Public Library & Information Center launched the InfoBUS in the 1990s after a significant influx of immigrants and refugees. The mobile branch library offered signage in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and English, 8 computers, internet access, ESL collections and foreign language collections (Virgillo, 2004, p. 9).
• Enoch Pratt Library houses a special collection of job searching materials at their central branch (Holt & Holt, 2010, p. 102).
• Port Washington Public Library in New York has an Art Advisory, Health Advisory, Music Advisory, and Nautical Advisory Council to help with collection development and plan and run events (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 78).

Archives can be important ways libraries house the histories of diverse communities and therefore promote social equity by collecting first person perspectives and community stories and events. For instance:

• Birmingham Public Library in Alabama has a significant Civil Rights archive, SFPL houses a Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Archive, and the Denver Public Library includes a Western History and Genealogy Department (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 166).

Community partnerships and outreach
Outreach efforts fight barriers to access with bookmobiles, homebound services, deposit collections, service to residential facilities, hospitals, shelters, jails and target populations (Meadows, 2004, p. 1-2). It can be a challenge for libraries to serve vulnerable and at-risk populations because transportation to the library can be an issue. Many libraries have
partnered with organizations that help bring the library to users rather than users to the library. Examples of outreach and partnerships include:

- The Kootenai-Shoshone Area Libraries of Idaho offered the “From Your Library” program which targeted people in areas who do not have walk-in access to a library for mobile library services that included a van equipped for circulation (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 117).

- In St. Johns County Public Library in Florida there is targeted outreach to the elderly, in which all 31 licensed facilities (nursing homes, senior residential, retirement communities, memory centers, assisted living facilities, adult day cares, etc.) in the county are visited twice a month through the use of an accessible van, which carries a variety of materials (books, dvds, fiction, nonfiction, books on CDs, etc.). The van is low to the ground, wheelchair accessible, and also provides magnifiers and materials for the blind (Karp, 2004, p. 7-8).

Social equity programs can help form connections and bonds between people and organizations. Some libraries create outreach kits or reading rooms for children, teens, and adults in shelters and soup kitchens, which might include small reading collections and other library promotional paraphernalia. Examples include:

- Intergenerational programs provided by St. Johns County Public Library in Florida incorporate holiday theme parties, chapter readings, memoir and mystery book clubs and so on (Karp, 2004, p. 8). In that case, youth, adults and the elderly come together in the library for the benefit of all.

- San Jose Public Library (SJPL) and San Jose State University (SJSU), which are collocated at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, partnered with the InnVision Shelter Network (now called LifeMoves effective January 26, 2016). InnVision Shelter Network is a Silicon Valley based nonprofit that tries to alleviate homelessness by providing housing. InnVision serves over 16,000 low-income people each year, and the library decided to extend programming into InnVision facilities, by teaching computer classes and hosting storytime onsite (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 111).


- Willett and Broadly (2011) cite a program called “Your Choice Books,” a partnership between Warrington Library, Museum and Archives Service, and the local YMCA which aims to create awareness about education, recreational, and leisure benefits available
to the homeless through a collection of books housed at the YMCA.

- The Community Technology Center of the Denver Public Library sends staff to local homeless shelters to provide job training, interviewing tips and technology instruction to low-income women. Bus tokens are given to participants after class as incentive for attending. Staff also offer participants a complimentary tour of the main library and the option to sign-up for a library card (Jaeger et al., 2015a, p. 62).

- Beyond InnVision, SJPL and SJSU are considering other partnerships and outreach opportunities with welfare hotels, Head Start programs, and food kitchens to include nutrition classes, family literacy programs and book discussion groups (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 111).

- Jaeger et al. (2015a) cite the library in Traverse City, Michigan as hosting a book club inside a local shelter (p. 62).

- Willett and Broadly (2011) discuss the “Friends at Christmas” project of Gloucestershire County Libraries and Information Services in the United Kingdom, which was a two-day event that provided internet access, outreach librarians, and computers in a homeless shelter over the holiday (p. 660-661).

- St. Louis Public Library (SLPL) partnered with local children’s museum, which Holt and Holt (2010) describe as “family experiences” (p. 103). For the family experiences, SLPL obtained a grant to pay for buses to evening events at a local children’s museum and the museum waived fees and provided parents with materials about teaching kids about science (Holt & Holt, 2010, p. 103). Public libraries create space for vulnerable populations by hosting programs or social hours and through direct contact with individual community members inside the library.

- San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) hired four health and safety advocates (HASAs), who work to promote services to the poor inside the library and were hired from within the community itself. The advocates are responsible for hosting a monthly health and wellness fair at the library, which offers resources and services that include eyeglasses, vaccines, shoes and haircuts to those who cannot afford them (Ruhlmann, 2014, p. 43).

- Dallas Public Library offers “Coffee and Conversation,” a dialogue between library staff, community members and people experiencing homelessness. All participants share their experience with each other over complimentary coffee. SFPL adopted the same idea, in which homeless users meet to share experiences and problems and talk about the library and its services (Ruhlmann, 2014, p. 44).

- In Seattle Public Library, in-house outreach to vulnerable
populations includes a Teen Drop-In Social Hour geared towards homeless teens to “visit the library for activities and peer group interactions” (Hill, 2016, p. 28).

Social equity-based services in public libraries can eliminate blind spots in targeted services and transform communities. Holt and Holt (2010) cite the SLPL where they two of them served as “user advocates” to a troubled institution that was not serving all community members, demographically speaking (p. 23). SLPL was serving mostly poor white families but African Americans and new Americans in the community were not using the library. SLPL reorganized some of its branches as “equity branches” in poor neighborhoods which used different measurements of success; they were unconcerned with circulation numbers, but focused rather on community outreach and partnerships, provided more after-school programs and cultural enrichment programming (Holt & Holt, 2010, p. 103).

Democratic participation and e-government

Many libraries (78.7%) provide direct assistance to users applying for or accessing e-government services and help in understanding and using e-government resources (88.8%) (Jaeger et al., 2012, p. 42). The majority of libraries (66.3%) regularly aid in completing government forms and a significant amount (43.4%) contribute to understanding government programs and services (Jaeger et al., 2012, p. 42). Civic engagement is promoted in many different ways.

• The joint task force of San Jose Public Library (SJPL) and San Jose State University (SJSU) was formed to recognize the library’s role in assisting vulnerable, at-risk and disadvantaged populations in order to fully engage them in participatory democracy (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 112).

• The Hartford Public Library in Connecticut provides links to voter registration resources, polling locations, and contact information for elected officials (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 136).

• The Rochester Public Library in Minnesota has a similar website, but additionally includes links to state legislators voting records and websites which track political contributions and fact checking (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 136).

• The Athens County Public Library in Ohio partnered with the League of Women Voters to create voting guides, resources, updated information on candidate forums, election and party issues, sample ballots and election results (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 136).

• Chapel Hill Public Library in North Carolina partnered with the Town of Chapel Hill Justice in Action Committee to host a series called “Civic Engagement and Social Justice,” which
included films, books, and programs about social justice, rights and responsibilities (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 136).

- The Peabody Institute Library in Massachusetts hosted a Teen Mayoral Forum, giving teens a place to voice their questions and opinions about issues, despite their inability to vote (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 136).

- Boulder Public Library in Colorado offers a “Geopolitics Series” with the Boulder Chapter of the United Nations Association, where participants read about current global issues and discuss the issues in a variety of contexts (political, social, ecological, etc.) (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 137).

- Havens and Dudley (2013) speculate about new ways libraries will provide information in the era of climate change in which the “passive democracy with which most of us are familiar” (p. 141) will undergo a shift to more engaged local policy and decision making.

Libraries partner with government bodies to assist citizens with access to government-provided services and resources.

- St. Johns County Public Library in Florida put library computers inside senior centers to expose them to First Coast Help, the St. Johns County social service database maintained by the library, which lists resources for emergencies, employment, food, housing, recreation and other areas of interest (Karp, 2004, p. 8).

- In Queens, New York the Department of State mandated that the Diversity Visa Application process be completed online, so the library partnered with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs to set up times at branch locations to accommodate the completion of the new online application (Jaeger et al., 2015a, p. 58).

- Alachua County Public Library (ACPL) in Florida shares its physical space with local government agencies, so that people using library to fill out documents have access to the actual agencies nearby (Jaeger et al., 2015a, p. 58)

- A partnership between the ACPL with the Florida’s Department of Children and Families provides library space devoted to child welfare with assistance in e-government access, homework help and GED and literacy classes (Jaeger et al., 2012, p. 45-46).


- The next step the SJPL and SJSU task force wants to take is developing “crisis literacy” programs that will provide how-tos for people navigating the bureaucracy of social services (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p.113).

Libraries assist with disaster preparedness and aftermath. Luo et al.
(2012) explain how library space is often used for disaster response; public libraries are typically one of the first local community organizations to provide support following a disaster, as was the case after Hurricane Katrina (p. 76). Public libraries achieved an important precedent in February of 2011, when FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) reversed their decision that libraries were not “essential” in providing emergency services and community support during the natural disaster Hurricane Katrina (Holt, 2013, p. 47). Some examples of library contributions to communities in times of disasters are:

- The public libraries in South Carolina’s Georgetown County partnered with the Department of Emergency Management on Web 2.0 materials to develop “video-game simulations, social media, oral-history video interviews, digital storytelling and the creation of a digital collection of historic hurricane views” for emergency preparedness (Jaeger et al., 2012, p. 46).

- In 2008, after Houston was affected by widespread property damage, loss of electricity, and interruption of basic services from Hurricane Ike, the Houston Public Library stepped in to help with relief efforts by setting up a Children’s Zone for families, since schools were closed, deployed the library’s mobile unit to deeply affected areas of the city and provided internet access and stations set up for FEMA claims and Army Corp of Engineers’ Blue Roof Assistance program (Langford, Weeks, & Lawson, 2013, p. 128).

Holt explains that libraries still struggle to achieve stable funding like other national entities deemed essential in times of disaster (like highways) (Holt, 2013, p. 47). It is important to note that the effects of peak oil and climate change will require identifying and securing usable agricultural land, securing alternative and low-energy means of transporting people and supplies, provisioning emergency shelters, and relocalization of the power supply, gardening, and support networks (Havens & Dudley, 2013, p. 141). Libraries could have a future role in addressing these potential disasters.

**Digital inclusion, technology, and internet access services**

Public access to internet connectivity in libraries across the United States was determined to be at 99.3 % and that the average public library has twenty internet-enabled workstations (Jaeger et al., 2014b, p. 53). These results came out in 2011 after a twenty year study and libraries are still working on bridging the digital divide.

- Pasco County Library in Florida has a program to train technology tutors in assisting older adults with basic computer skills; Old Bridge Public Library in New Jersey provides a specific area to seniors called the Computer Training Center; and Alameda County Library in
Fremont, California offers computer classes and intergenerational technology instruction (Jaeger et al., 2015a, p. 54).

- In St. Johns County Public Library in Florida there is targeted outreach to the elderly, which received a grant to put 10 computers in senior facilities where librarians would hold basic computer classes to connect seniors to technology (Karp, 2004, p. 8). To demonstrate the usefulness of computers, they host an Antiques Roadshow program where participants go online to research the value of their item, which is then auctioned off (one example being a $250,000 meteorite) (Karp, 2004, p. 8).

- St. Louis Public Library (SLPL) and libraries in the Seattle area were some of the first in the country to receive a Gates Foundation grant to fund computer training labs with a broader scope of services bridging the digital divide (not just for older people, for example). The computer labs featured ways for little kids to play games and access materials for homework; for teens and adults to receive GED prep and learn to use Word and Excel and access adult literacy instruction; the labs seek to especially target workplace literacy problems (Holt & Holt, 2010, p. 100).

- The previously mentioned task force at SJPL and SJSU discovered there is a significant digital divide among Silicon Valley residents in terms of socioeconomic status, including many differences in capability of using Internet resources. They found that homeless users frequently utilize the public workstations, but that many of them need computer training. The library had computer skills classes covering computer basics, computer programs and internet use, which combat the digital divide in terms of both age divisions and socioeconomic status (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 112).


**Educational opportunities and literacy**

While the obvious association between libraries and books can be cited here, literacy comes in many different forms. Luo et al. (2012) cites lifelong learning as a value of libraries which is implemented through “literacy programs, access to consumer health information, GED test preparation” and so on (p. 75). Jaeger et al. (2015a) postulate that librarians end up teaching information literacy and skills for the 21st century on a regular, day-to-day basis (p. 76). Jaeger et al. (2014b) summarize a twenty-year study that included survey findings describing how almost all (96.5%) public libraries provide homework assistance, the majority (55.1%) of public libraries offer online language learning courses and tools, and as of 2012 all (100%) of public libraries provide
free access to online educational databases (p. 53).

Specific examples of educational opportunity include:

- In 2012, King County Library in Washington partnered with Literacy AmeriCorp and Literacy Advocate Designates to provide Adult Basic Education classes in their communities (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 116).

- Librarians at SJPL and SJSU established book clubs and family literacy programs to accommodate low-income and low-education users in comfortable, accessible ways. For example, SJPL and SJSU researched what time shelters open for intake or when soup kitchens are serving meals in order to plan and schedule effective programming that targets homeless populations (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 111). They learned that single-session, focused workshops are effective to combat the lack of reliability some people without transportation have. Because lessons depend on consistency, time slots are important, and SJPL and SJSU made sure to provide consistent weekly classes, as well as drop-in hours with one-on-one skill building (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 113).

- SLPL trained day-care service providers to be children’s first teachers by equipping them with tools to help young children get ready to learn to read with particular reading activities. Workshop attendees received continuing education credits through the state body that licenses day-cares. Storytime providers at SLPL were also trained to present models of behavior to parents for early literacy. Project REAL (Read and Learn) was established for low income families and provided reading activities, programs, parties and field trips (Holt & Holt, 2010, p. 101).

- Anderson (2012) cites SJPL and SJSU partnering “with community agencies to provide computer classes, resume workshops, and English as a second language (ESL) classes for their homeless and low-income patrons” (p. 79).

- The Athens–Clarke County Library in Georgia offers “exchange programs” which partner an English and a Spanish speaking family together to learn languages from each other while participating in a fun, hands-on cultural activity (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 177).

Employment

Some libraries are making efforts to directly employ vulnerable populations in outreach positions. Doing so gives people the skills, experience and training to secure future employment. The following are examples of libraries that have gone above and beyond merely providing resources about employment, but directly and actively employing vulnerable populations.
• Philadelphia Public Library collaborates with Project H.O.M.E. to employ community members as library bathroom attendants and food servers at H.O.M.E. Page Cafe in the Parkway Central Branch while also offering job skills training (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 107).Basically, “four formerly homeless individuals serve more than 150 customers daily” and a total of “17 formerly homeless people have been trained and gone on to other employment” (Blank, 2014, p. 14). Anderson, Simpson, and Fisher (2012) describe the same program as “reduc[ing] problems while helping homeless individuals to engage in the workforce” (p. 79). Participants gain experience in customer service, coffee preparation, workplace skills and are required to pass the ServSafe Food safety exam, which also helps them build their resume.

• The BiblioTech STEM program of the Kitsap Regional Library in Washington State offers technology and access to all teens, but beginning in 2013 they offered science and tech classes particularly to teens experiencing homelessness through a Paul G. Allen Family Foundation Grant. For all teens, including those without homes, they also created a 100-hour STEM learning internship and an after-school STEM program with workshops on video design, robotics, computer programming and 3D printers through partnership with Coffee Oasis, a faith-based nonprofit (Hill, 2016, p. 28).

• SFPL hired four health and safety advocates who were formerly homeless themselves (Ruhlmann, 2014, p. 43).

Financial stability and support
Income inequality is a growing issue in most major cities in the United States and to promote greater social equity libraries promote education about finances and assistance in finding tax cuts. While information is not a cure-all to economic stratification, it does help people make better decisions about finances and assists low-income people in saving money and receiving benefits.

• Enoch Pratt Free Library provides a variety of programs in finances including home-buying seminars, financial management, income tax assistance, ways to start a business, perform market research, career and job training and small business owner assistance (Francis, 2013, p. 69).

• In Ohio, the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton partnered with the Ohio Benefit Bank to create information resources about tax credits and work support for low income families (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 141).

• Queens Public Library in New York offers “Financial Literacy in the Community” classes, which were presented in English and a
second language and made available online (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 176).

- San Diego County Library saw its community face a rise in home foreclosures and began to offer Homeowners Mobile Education to help residents learn about mortgages real estate and credit (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 71).

Food and nutritional programs

Rauseo & Edwards (2013) recognize that “libraries certainly cannot address all of the circumstances that lead to individual households being food insecure, they can (and we believe should) play a role in addressing community food security in association with community partners” (p. 89). Providing and sharing food also builds relationships between members of the community who eat together.

- Peabody Institute Library’s Summer Food Service Program provides lunches to youth in at-risk neighborhoods in the summer which partners with a substance abuse program, senior center, local church and workforce investment board (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 106). The Peabody Institute Library in Massachusetts started the Summer Food Service Program, in order to combat food insecurity, but also to increase self-reliance of communities, promote nutrition education and support local farms (Rauseo & Edwards, 2013, p. 89).

- Collins, Howard, & Miraflor (2009) recommend offering food and childcare so families will come to programs they might not get a chance to otherwise, especially adult literacy and educational classes.

- Libraries have provided snacks in storytime or at teen programming, but are now adding cafes and coffee carts to make the library more welcoming (Rauseo & Edwards, 2013, p. 89).

- Watauga County Public Library in North Carolina partnered with the Building Common Ground Project to host a series on food security that featured book groups, films, speakers, local farm tours and a community service fair (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 141).

- The Northern Onondaga Public Library in Cicero, New York utilizes a half acre of library land as an organic community garden, which community members can use to “check out” a plot of land and grow anything they’d like, alongside a shared area where anyone can plant, maintain and pick anything they want (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 148).

Health and wellness

While libraries do not generally provide healthcare services, there are some ways libraries can promote health and wellness. Libraries can
provide information and programming, or actively employ social workers to assist those in need of mental health services or substance abuse.

- The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore partnered with Baltimore City Health Department to create the Virtual Supermarket Project in which areas known as food deserts can receive access to grocery ordering and delivery through the library (Jaeger et al., 2012, p. 46).
- SFPL and the San Francisco Department of Public Health hired a social worker who “handled referrals for social services for library patrons who are chronically homeless, mentally ill and those struggling with substance abuse” (Jaeger et al., 2012, p. 46).
- Queens Public Library in New York offers an online resource section titled “English for your Health” with exercises and vocabulary for assistance in medical and dental appointments, prescriptions and emergencies (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 176).
- The Baltimore Public Library in Maryland has a webpage dedicated to survivors of domestic violence, suicide attempters, victims of rape, those struggling with eating disorders and other mental health issues. In Saginaw, Michigan the library provides resources on teen parenting (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 141).

**Immigrant and refugee focused services**

Libraries are doing a lot to work with immigrant and refugee populations and are one of the first friendly places newcomers to the United States can go. Listed here are merely a few examples of how libraries are working to welcome and assist immigrants and refugees, as this is an evolving and growing aspect of public library focus.

- Jaeger, Bertot, Shuler, and McGilvray (2012) describe a partnership between the Austin Public Library in Texas and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services agency to create “New Immigrants Centers.” These centers provide resources and support for immigrants in multiple languages and include classes on citizenship and test preparation; the Hartford Public Library in Connecticut has a similar partnership and program (Jaeger et al., 2012, p. 46).
- Austin Public Library in Texas provides traditional resources on citizenship to newcomers in the community, but also a digital “Newcomers Guide” which includes information on cultural groups, job searching, legal and social services and how to start a new business, which is particularly noteworthy for its extensiveness (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 178).

**Legal services**

Legal services are crucial for vulnerable populations like undocumented immigrants and the homeless. In many places across the United
States sleeping outside or loitering is a ticketable offense, yet people experiencing homelessness often have nowhere else to go.

- At SJPL and SJSU, the “Lawyers in the Library” program serves users with 20-minute legal consultations.
- Also at SJPL and SJSU, the “Day of Service” focuses on opportunities for housing, rehabilitation, and educational enrichment, which guide users through paperwork (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 114-115). The “Day of Service” effort is meant to reach as many people as possible in a brief time frame, which is especially useful to those needing immediate assistance. “Day of Service” attempts to provide legal assistance “lite” through assistance in navigating leases, government assistance forms, etc.
- Jaegar et al. (2015a) describe public library efforts that provide legal support in Texas, Illinois, and Minnesota. The Travis County Law Library in Texas created a partnership with local judges and clerks to develop court forms that are available online.
- A partnership between the Chicago Bar Foundation, Lawyer’s Trust Fund, Illinois Legal Aid Online, and the Chicago Kent College of Law developed technology-based legal self-help centers located inside local public libraries (Jaegar et al., 2015a).
- The Central Minnesota Legal Services got a grant to develop library-legal aid collaborations, which included a statewide webinar series to train librarians on online legal resources (Jaegar et al., 2015a).

Programs to improve quality of life and promote diversity and inclusivity

Many services and programs detailed here target specific financial, health, education, and entertainment needs of vulnerable or marginalized populations.

- Enoch Pratt Free Library provides a variety of programs in general education, literacy, health and wellness workshops and multicultural celebrations (Francis, 2013, p. 69).
- Chicago Public Library in Illinois provides downloadable kits for parents to familiarize children with autism with the library prior to visiting, alongside sensory storytimes and the opportunity to practice reading with a service dog (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 182).
- The Boulder Public Library in Colorado partnered with the University of Colorado and the Arts and Humanities Assembly of Boulder to present a “Communities in Exile” series of panel discussions which featured Sioux/Assiniboine tribe members telling stories, Japanese, Latin American, and Caribbean dancers,
Afghans singing folk songs and West African traditional music (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 179).

- The Skokie Public Library in Illinois hosted a program organized by the local Indian community to explore views on religious traditions and peace and nonviolence (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 139).

- Hill (2016) cites Project Uplift at the Salt Lake City Library, which brings together a variety of local social service groups to host a fair with free haircuts, clothing, meals and raffle tickets for useful goods (which vary based on what is donated) (p. 28).

- Collins, Howard, and Miraflor (2009) suggest that families experiencing homelessness may be attracted to fun, creative programming that engages children, for the same reason anyone else would. Storytimes with songs, reading, crafts and activities promote early literacy for children, but offer entertainment to homeless families. While traditional social services which provide food, shelter, and clothing are essential, all people, regardless of socioeconomic status, also enjoy entertainment.

- Peabody Institute Library in Massachusetts offered a storytime for adults with disabilities and Contra Costa County Library in California hosted a special tour of the library for a large group of adults with disabilities (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 183).

- SFPL has mobile showers outside the library that includes soap, shampoo and towels in a partnership with Lava Mae (Ruhlmann, 2014, p. 43).

- The Earn-a-Bike program for teens at the Peabody Institute Library in Massachusetts was inspired by local nonprofit Bikes Not Bombs (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 79).

- Dallas Public Library hosts a Street View Podcast which is created by homeless users, but includes local social service agency representatives, homeless guests and library staff members, covering many issues including homelessness, drugs and mental illness (Hill, 2016, p. 28).

- SLPL also provided what they characterized as “aspirational programming” such as “How to Make Your Home Look Nice and Be Comfortable on a Very Tight Budget” and “Personal Grooming for Girls” (Holt & Holt, 2010, p. 104).

Reference services
Reference services act as social services in public libraries in two ways, through crisis reference (Westbrook, 2015), which are of an urgent or life threatening nature, and information consultations about longer term needs and services (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009). Homeless users have indicated the need for information regarding: finances,
relationships with others, childcare, housing, health and health care (for self and for others), employment, education (for self and for others), transportation and public assistance (for self and for others) (Hersberger, 2005). The SJPL and SJSU task force analyzes programs and found that information needs were heavily dependent on the situational need of the individual person experiencing homelessness (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p.112). These needs included information needs for basic daily life, like having shelter, food to eat, clothing to wear; but also other long-term information needs like affordable housing, psychological services, substance abuse problems, skill building, health care, child care, transportation, employment and education (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 112). The public library is not always the best community resource to find these answers, because libraries “might not have the lists for local subsidized housing available, but librarians ought to be able to know where in the community such information is known” (Hersberger, 2005). One revelation of the SJPL and SJSU task force was that the homeless population can find the reference desk very intimidating, which is another challenge for librarians (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 113). Given these challenges, it is important that a skilled librarian be able to connect users to helpful and useful information through referrals and consultations.

- SJPL and SJSU generated an inventory of library resources for homeless children, teens, and adults and also identified potential partner agencies. The result of this action was a homeless resources page developed for the library web site which refers staff helping the homeless to national and local agencies (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009).
- In Baltimore County, Maryland, the public library and Baltimore County Communities for the Homeless partnered together to create a “street card,” which includes a list of resources for jobs, food, monetary and emergency contact information (Jaeger et al., 2015a, p. 62).
- Blank (2014) explains that SFPL was the first public library in the country to hire a licensed marriage and family therapist. SFPL has an in-house social workers who provides counseling and referrals to homeless and mentally ill users.
- The Pima County Library was the first in the country to hire public health nurses (Blank, 2014).
- Two programs were developed by SJPL and SJSU that utilize partnerships with other professionals as support for crisis reference: “Lawyers in the library” and “Social workers in the library.” Luo et al. (2012) describe in-depth the partnership between SJSU’s School of Social Work, SJPL, and the local chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, which resulted in the creation of
the Social Workers in the Library (SWITL) program. Bilingual (Spanish and English) social workers volunteer their time for one-on-one consultations in the library and aim to address a broad range of social needs, including family issues like disagreements, death, adoption, child care, elder care, foster care, divorce; economic issues like unemployment, underemployment and homelessness; health issues such as recovery from substance abuse, emergency services for food, clothing, housing and crisis support; the need for education; and the special needs of immigrants, refugees and English language learners including literacy, legal help, housing and support groups (Luo et al., 2012, p. 74-75, 77). These professionals assist users in “negotiating shelter, food banks, employment, child-care, education and transportation issues”. The librarian’s role is to facilitate consultation by offering private meeting rooms for privacy, as well as by setting up appointments for homeless users with social workers or lawyers (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p.113).

Space
Library space should be welcoming and safe for all users. Space can be especially important to vulnerable populations who might not have many other options of free, indoor space where they are welcome.

• Collins, Howard, and Miraflor (2009) believe the architecture of the shared campus of the city-university and public library system consisting of SJPL and SJSU promotes the idea of upward mobility. They claim that the “visual message” of the dual public/academic library, allows a public library user, regardless of socioeconomic status, to access the university’s resources, which can help them “advance socially, economically, and professionally” even if they do not necessarily pursue a degree there (Collins, Howard, & Miraflor, 2009, p. 109).

• Jaeger et al. (2014b) found the majority of libraries (53.3%) offer workspaces for mobile workers, which can refer to either entrepreneurs, people who rely on the gig economy or other non-traditional work situations, some of which can certainly pertain to those struggling with economic hardships such as homelessness, poverty, and underemployment (p. 53).

• To combat social exclusion, Hoyer cites DeFaveri’s (2005) example of using library space for non-library community programming as often as possible (p. 59).

• Madison Public Library made sure to accommodate user privacy when redesigning its buildings, because they wanted to make sure homeless users had access to private workstations given that privacy is rare when living on the streets (Ruhlmann, 2014, p. 44).
Many libraries have been investing in gardens and green spaces in order to help people experience nature. In Addison, Illinois, the public library has a rooftop garden which also functions as a rainwater abatement system (Jordan, 2013, p.101). Jordan (2013) cites research showing the amount of green spaces in a community is connected with the perceived help and well-being of community members because gardens are a source of peace, contemplation, beautification, fundraising, and a food source (p. 101, 103-107). Blank (2014) describes the overlap between the social work and library fields, citing how libraries act as day shelters for those experiencing homelessness. The restrooms, safe spaces and lack of security checks make the library a welcoming place for its homeless users.

**Sustainability and environmental crisis**

Safety from natural disasters is growing increasingly important in the contemporary age of extreme weather, climate change and rising shorelines. As mentioned, libraries have attempted to help with disaster relief, but they can serve proactive educational roles and adapt to changing information needs.

- The Spokane Public Library in Washington, the Missoula Public Library in Montana, and the Kalamazoo Public Library in Michigan provide online resources about sustainability, energy, and the environment on their website (Edwards, Robinson, & Unger, 2013, p. 141-142).
- Slone (2008) speculates that after peak oil, libraries will fill gaps in information needs about local resources for food, medicine, travel, shelter, talent, experts, native plants, transportation, environmental needs, clean water, alternative energy, self-reliance and health (p. 28-31).

**Professional training for library staff and hiring practices**

The quality and effectiveness of every library and its services depend on staff training and the hiring of individuals who value social equity as the mission of the library. To combat ignorance of resources and provide crisis reference that addresses the complex needs of vulnerable populations, trauma-informed training is key. Westbrook (2015) offers a four-part model of reference service that is centered on users and their crisis situations using interactions with librarians as problem-solving mechanisms. Ideally, trained professionals in the social work or educational fields would be assisting at-risk and vulnerable library users either as employees or in partnership with public libraries, but because of the limited staffing and funding, public librarians and library workers themselves sometimes face crisis situations they are unprepared for. Westbrook (2015) posits “identity studies” as a strategy
for providing the best services to at-risk populations. The identity study takes into account each individual and their specific experience and challenge in order to best serve them. She demonstrates her method using domestic abuse survivors, but suggests the method can be morphed to help any at-risk or special-needs population.

Hersberger (2011) insists that library and information personnel ought not act in a therapeutic or clinical role to address mental health issues, which should be left to trained professionals, but does suggest library staff better attempt to understand stress, resiliency and their effect on information seeking behaviors to better serve users. Anderson, Simpson, and Fisher (2012) present an exploratory study using surveys from library staff in the United States focusing on staff relationships with homeless users and their ability to help them. They determined that “library staff may be in a position to help, yet they are not well trained to address the specific and often complex needs of homeless people” (p.77). They note that library staff is susceptible to compassion fatigue, in which they become exhausted and unfeeling (p. 79). Having a staff trained in sensitivity and special needs is important, but so is having a culturally diverse staff, which can be key to opening up interactions with equally diverse users and making them feel welcome in the library (Hoyer, 2013, p. 59). Having a team-oriented staff who are also respectful of each other is important in a high stress environment. In her experience, Rios Balderrama (2004) found the public library workplace to be characterized by frustration, disrespect, lack of recognition, lack of opportunity for development or advancement, lack of accessibility to management and generally unfriendly attitudes towards coworkers. Furthermore, libraries were found to be experienced as organizations of distrust, elitism, hierarchy, racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, divisiveness between departments and job classifications, stuffiness and low morale (p. 110).

Negative attitude and treatment of library users by library staff can be combated with proper training. Hersberger (2005) emphasizes that classifying the homeless as “problem patrons” is outright discrimination and explains that a toddler would never be asked to leave the library for being smelly, loud, or sleeping and that no one would deem them unworthy of library services. Hersberger (2005) warns too of perceptions by librarians which delineate between deserving or undeserving users.

As Hersberger (2005) explains that because of this attitude, homeless patrons are often not treated with dignity by staff members. Hersberger (2005) also admits that individual problematic behaviors are certainly grounds for dismissal from the library, but a “cheerful and helpful attitude goes a long way in making a homeless person’s day,” and that sentiment can certainly extend to any human being who walks in the doors of the public library.
Conclusion

The modern public library is a vibrant “community-funded public good” (McCook, 2013, p. vii). The public library has the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and changing communities. Public libraries are dynamic and strive to be egalitarian places through their many services and programs. It is evident libraries value social equity when they actively work to achieve a more socially just world. By providing equal access, libraries promote social equity, and no matter how distant or improbable contemporary society seems as nearing that a just and equal society, the public library still has a role in fighting for that future. Stereotyped as quiet, static places with oak furniture, libraries are actually moving deeper into their own communities and positioning themselves as central to the needs of all users, especially the most at-risk and vulnerable. While libraries are not attempting to make people into any one “type,” as in the days of Andrew Carnegie’s self-improvement based facilities, the library focuses on bettering the quality of life for a diverse range of individuals in order to make their communities and society at large better places to live. Social equity-based services in libraries create social bonds and a sense of community through programming and space, promote equal access to as many users as possible and provide essential social support, proving the library to be more relevant than ever.

Two leaders in the contemporary library world sum up well the goals and purposes of the public library and their role in promoting social equity. As Sari Feldman, president of the American Library Association for 2015-2016 explains, today’s libraries “play a huge role in serving all people, in particular, the neediest. We have a great opportunity to create equity and to change lives” (Blank, 2014, p. 12). Carla D. Hayden (2004), former director of Enoch Pratt Free Library, ALA president from 2003-2004, and current Librarian of Congress, states “The commitment to inclusive service delivery means involvement of the entire community and all community stakeholders” (ix). If positive transformation is not the goal of contemporary public libraries, then they have failed as public institutions and as needs-based government organizations. While public libraries often strive to be all things to all people, their essential democratizing purpose and value lies in promoting social equity through providing social-equity based services. Social equity can only be achieved (if ever) by fostering a sense of community, social support, and a safe, egalitarian space for all community members to use and meet their needs, especially those most in need.

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Strange Career
Reconciling Race and Profession in American Librarianship

by Steven Harris

Librarianship in the United States has struggled to diversify the ranks of its profession in a manner that satisfies the goals of organizational leaders in the American Library Association (ALA) and members of diverse racial and ethnic groups themselves. Despite the formation of the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (or rather the reformation of previous offices into ODLOS with the inclusion of diversity in their charge) and the development of various equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives, the ethnic makeup of librarians in the U.S. remains largely unchanged since the 1990s, with roughly 88% of librarians identifying as white.¹ More recently, Schonfeld and Sweeney (2017) have found that academic libraries show a slightly lower overall percentage of white librarians (71%), but the administrative and leadership ranks are still near the

¹ See “Equity, Diversity & Inclusion” on the ALA ODLOS website: http://www.alal.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/edi. The Strategic Directions listed there articulate several goals, including, “Commit to ameliorating marginalization and underrepresentation within the Association and the communities served by libraries through increased understanding of the effects of historical exclusion,” and “Expand the work of ALA and its allies in building a diverse and inclusive profession.” Also see Denise M. Davis and Tracie D. Hall, Diversity Counts: Office for Research and Statistics, Office for Diversity (Arlington, Va.: Compiled by the American Library Association, Office for Research and Statistics, Office for Diversity, 2007) and the 2012 update of this report on the ODLOS website: http://www.alal.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts.

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Progressive Librarian

The dissatisfaction with this ongoing situation is attested by voices gathered in various works like *Unfinished Business: Race, Equity, and Diversity in Library and Information Science Education* and *The 21st-Century Black Librarian in America.* This situation suggests that American librarianship needs to reconcile its dominant narrative of openness and inclusion with the facts of its history, which, in the United States, might more accurately be characterized as indifferent, if not openly hostile, to diversity and inclusion. In much the same manner that Michael Harris endeavored to de-mythologize the foundations of the public library movement in the United States, we must look beyond the accepted narrative, and, perhaps, realize that the narrative actually serves to reinforce ideas of race that are not healthy for the profession of librarianship. A second, and equally important, part to the process would be that the library profession reconcile with groups and individuals who have been wronged and harmed: to provide some form of restitution of professional value and dignity—even to those who are no longer living. This two-part need for reconciliation should be open-ended with no specified closing date. The history of racism in the library profession should continue to be investigated and published, and our professional organizations should continue to acknowledge the contributions of librarians of color and the role professional organizations played in thwarting and suppressing those contributions throughout our history.

The model of reconciliation that is most prevalent in recent history is that of the nation of South Africa, which formed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission following the abolition of Apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela as President. The report of the Commission describes a two-part goal as well: establishing as complete a picture as possible of the history of Apartheid and creating a mechanism for people to voice the suffering they endured under the racist regime and for the nation to acknowledge that suffering.

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While not all formal reconciliation processes in recent world history have been as successful as that in South Africa, Bar-Tal and Bennink observe that reconciliation, in many cases, is a necessary step beyond simple conflict resolution because “…the majority of society members may not accept the negotiated compromises, or even if they do they may still hold worldviews that have fueled the conflict.” Furthermore, they recognize that “[r]econciliation requires changing societal beliefs about one’s own group.”

This need goes to the heart of two works by Rosemary Du Mont from 1986—a need that has still not been met in American librarianship. “Many black librarians,” she observed, “realize that if their contribution to the profession is to be fully recognized and respected, whites must be encouraged to learn about the black librarian experience and understand it as best they can from the black point of view.” By 1986, white librarianship already had ample opportunity to learn about the black librarian experience. Students of Virginia Lacy Jones in the library program at Atlanta University were encouraged to study the information needs and black experience in libraries. Over 100 theses describing library research in the African American community were written at Atlanta between 1951 and 1986. Wiegand (2017) describes the lack of citations these studies of the black experience have received in the professional literature. “One can image,” Wiegand writes, “the sense of frustration Atlanta students and faculty felt as they shared findings, and their disappointment with a profession that claimed to be in favor of free access but did little to bring it about in the South. The soaring rhetoric about intellectual freedom and opposition to censorship that resonated in ALA conference speeches did not match the reality they experienced and the research they generated.”

Another source of learning about the black experience was the work of E. J. Josey. By 1986, he had already served as editor of two compilations of personal narratives from black librarians and one

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handbook that documented many of the historical events in the development of black professional librarians.9

Although in recent years there has been a growing interest in the history of civil rights and libraries (stimulated, perhaps, by Tucker’s *Untold Stories* collection of essays10), the historiography of this period has focused on the desegregation of libraries and access to libraries by the public and tells us little about the desegregation of the librarian or the integration of the profession of librarianship. Du Mont and Peterson (1996) are among the few examples of scholarly discourse addressing this topic in our literature.11 This deficiency in the record is probably representative of the general cultural imprecision found in all considerations of libraries versus librarians. Examinations of libraries are often conflated with librarians; the practice of librarianship is often documented through the physical evidence of libraries. In the history of librarianship, we are presented with, on the one hand, segregated libraries, and then, after a period of social turmoil, integrated libraries, but rarely are we introduced to the professional or personal conflict within librarianship itself that contributed to the social change. The examination of segregation within librarianship and the history of its integration is a story that is only spottily told. The author cannot make a claim to a sociological study of race and the library profession; this paper examines, rather, a few specific historical touchstones in the professionalization of librarianship, in a narrative fashion, with the aim of furthering a reconciliation between history and aspiration. Throughout the paper, the term “librarianship” is used to refer to the profession, the processes of entering and being active in the profession, and aspects of professionalization—which are often racialized—rather than simply to library praxis or tasks commonly employed in libraries. The focus will be on people and organizations, particularly during the twentieth century, leading up to and including the Civil Rights Movement. As such, the primary concern is the access of African Americans to the field of librarianship. The stories of other racial and ethnic groups gaining access to the profession, though worthy of

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further research, are not examined here.

One cannot write of civil rights and the evolution of librarianship without referencing external social forces in American history. The arc of segregation in the library profession is also traced by three consequential legal events. The first of these is the Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* of 1896, which was the culmination of eroded civil rights that had begun immediately after the Civil War, and continued throughout Reconstruction and beyond.12 This case established “separate but equal” as accepted legal practice throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Subsequent to *Plessy*, as Woodward (1974) has documented, the notion of Jim Crow (the cultural practice of segregation) was a growing and nationwide phenomenon: “as…the South veered toward proscription and extremism, Northern opinion shifted to the right, keeping pace with the South, conceding point after point, so that at no time were the sections very far apart on race policy.”13 And, thus, prior to 1965, one could fairly say that the idea of “separate but equal” pervaded librarianship in all parts of the country.

The second major historical event in this arc is the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* of 1954, which is often thought to have overturned “separate but equal,” and is widely recognized as the pivotal event in bringing about the end of segregation.14 It was, perhaps, the tipping point in the national consciousness regarding segregation, and, certainly, the galvanizing event of midcentury that inspired many people with hope for better things to come, but the author believes its role in desegregation, outside of public education, is largely overstated. *Brown*, it must be remembered, also galvanized opposition to desegregation and inspired the reactionary countermovement known as Massive Resistance—through which organizations like the (white) Citizens’ Councils fought, both publicly and covertly, to maintain racist social structures.15 Though it was pivotal raising expectations regarding equal rights, *Brown* alone did little to desegregate public libraries or the library profession.

The final event in this arc is the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, which, in fact, invalidated (and made illegal) most *de jure* discrimination and segregation in the public arena, including public libraries.16 Professional organizations, however, as private entities, were not directly compelled

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to integrate under the Act, and, thus, the law held no direct sway over library organizations. In their time, these touchstones neither necessitated a segregated library profession nor later brought about its integration. They simply established the culture within which librarians were compelled—or chose—to operate. Access by African Americans to the fruits of professional librarianship are bounded by these social events. They dictate or predict many of the relationships of professional library organizations, especially those of the American Library Association (ALA) and its affiliates, during the Civil Rights Movement, and the conflict those organizations experienced brought about by the struggle for racial equality.

Race and Professions

Professionalism is, as described by Freidson, “a set of institutions which permit the members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work.” And further, that this state of privilege “cannot exist unless it is believed that the particular tasks they perform are so different from those of most workers that self-control is essential.” Self-control, therefore, is only maintained through strict regulation of admission to the profession. The literature on the development of professions and professionalization, as with the professionalization of librarianship, is largely silent to the history of segregation as a regulatory mechanism in the professional ranks. Even though the prevalent models for analysis of professions focus on elitism and exclusion, (Abbott and Larson as two examples) these concepts are handled primarily in economic and class, rather than racial terms, with an emphasis on division of labor as the principal instrument of professionalization. New groups are admitted to professions, Abbott observes, but these typically are oriented around the “task demand” of particular occupations that gain admittance to an existing profession, not as a result of the membership being opened up to diverse cultural, ethnic, or racial groups.

Abbott’s study of professions as systems relies on the analysis of eight first events in the development of 130 American and British professions:

1. (National) professional association
2. Governmentally sponsored licensing legislation

19 Abbott, 91.
3. Professional examinations  
4. Professional school separate from some other profession  
5. University-based professional education  
6. Ethics code  
7. National-level journal  
8. Accreditation of schools (U.S.) or certification by association (England)  

These milestones map fairly well to librarianship, though a few do not bear directly on this case. The story of how African Americans have participated in these events reflect, in many ways, the exclusion they have endured. A simpler model that relates more directly to American librarianship will be used in this study to describe African American access to four elements within librarianship:  
9. Admission to professional-level education  
10. Admission to professional organizations  
11. Participation in organizational conferences  
12. Access to professional publication outlets  

These four elements are entwined together in librarianship in a way that makes an enumerative and chronological narrative difficult. They also weave into the African American experience in complicated ways.

Other professions have participated in segregation in similar ways to librarianship. Typically, this discrimination has included constraints on access by African Americans through both the professionally prescribed education and the professional organizations themselves. Of the medical profession, Watson (1999) states, “Among the many expressions of these constraints were attempts by some whites to obstruct access by African Americans to medical education and their subsequent practice and mobility within the profession.”  

The rise of professionalism and participation in professions by African Americans, as Hine (1989) observes, actually occurred in parallel with “the solidification of racial segregation and discrimination” in the United States.  

The rise of segregation and the rise of professionalism mirror one another. Many of the greatest improvements in access by women and minorities during the twentieth century, Sokoloff (1992) found, were driven by overall growth within particular professions, although these tended to be professions with lower pay and prestige (teaching

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20 Ibid., 16-17.  
and social work, rather than law and medicine). Librarianship goes against this pattern (if one considers it to be a “lower-prestige” profession as defined by Sokoloff) in that it has not become a site of greater access for ethnic minorities. Sokoloff also found that the growth of professional access was driven by “separate but equal” services to the African American community. Black teachers, lawyers, doctors, and nurses served a black clientele.

In education, law, medicine and other professions, because of restrictions placed on their participation, African Americans formed their own state and national associations. Many of these were created in the two decades on either side of 1900. The National Medical Association (still in existence today) was founded in 1895 to serve the professional needs of African American physicians, who were excluded from the American Medical Association. The American Colored Teachers Association (with several subsequent name changes) was formed in 1906 for similar reasons, as was the National Negro Bar Association (1909). This is the essence of segregation: it is inherently unfair and unequal, but it also creates a space that is unique to the given racial/ethnic group. Most of these African American professional organizations were also the nexus for the launch of a professional journal. Librarianship follows many of the patterns of development seen in other professions, but it is also exhibits peculiar differences.

American librarianship evolved in a society that was built on and later racked with the pain of slavery and its aftermath. Although a war had been fought to eliminate the practice of slavery, Reconstruction demonstrated that few white Americans, regardless of whether they were Northerners or Southerners, had any sense of or interest in what racially inclusive equity or justice would look like, much less how it should be created. Some came to this position through ignorance but many came through racism. The same holds true for white librarians of the era. With the simultaneous inauguration in 1876 (as Reconstruction was unraveling) of the American Library Association and The Library Journal, Melvil Dewey, who had worked so hard to realize both, pronounced the coming of age of American librarianship. “The time has at last come,” he writes in that first issue,

24 Ibid., 17.
“when a librarian may, without assumption, speak of his occupation as a profession,” and later, “[w]ill any man deny to the high calling of such a librarianship the title of profession?” But the era—and this founding generation of librarians—was fundamentally dominated by white Anglo-Saxon Protestant males like Dewey himself. Though a belief in the redeeming qualities of reading is part of the DNA of librarianship, and the profession was born from an interest in serving and uplifting all members of society, many of its organizational responses to inequality were paternalistic and shockingly tone deaf and have continued to be up to the present. “Uplift” itself, it should be noted, was more of a code word for “control.” Yet, even in the nineteenth century, many members of ALA did express great concern about access to libraries for African Americans in the South (and other parts of the country) as well as the rights of African American librarians to participate fully in professional organizations. In practice, however, ALA mostly exhibited conciliation to local practice and culture. Southern librarians, while exhibiting widespread concern about opening libraries to all the citizens within their jurisdictions and providing, as best they could, some level of service, were, nonetheless, mostly unconvinced by a call for racial equality or incapacitated by local laws, fear of reprisal, or their own racism, and ultimately did not participate to any great extent in the civil rights activism that later marked the 1950s and 1960s in America.

Throughout the early twentieth century, because of de jure and de facto institutions of segregation, library services to African Americans were very limited, especially in the South. Many communities offered no services whatsoever. Others offered some form of segregated service. In the best cases, like the Louisville Free Public Library, there was an entire well-staffed and well-stocked branch available to African Americans. In other cases, access to branch libraries was limited by day and time, and black users were generally not welcome or entitled to the full range of services that whites enjoyed. Often, African Americans

only had access to bookmobile service and even that was from a separate (and not very equal) vehicle from the white bookmobile. In almost all cases where integration of library services had already taken place (before the main actions of the Civil Rights Movement) it was affected in a “quiet” way, which is to say it was not publicized in either the black or the white community.30

Access to Library Education

Because there were few library services offered and because educational opportunities for African Americans were also limited, entrance to the library profession was very restricted. Therefore, notable examples for young people to revere and emulate were few. There were very few African-American librarians in the South or any other part of the country. In no cases that the author can identify in the South during the time of de jure segregation were there African American librarians working in otherwise integrated library services. Even in other parts of the country where the service did not discriminate against library users of different races and ethnicities, African American librarians in those facilities were not allowed to perform public services and were often restricted to “back of house” duties. Thus, to the eyes of most library users, librarians were white—except in segregated branch services, in black elementary schools, and in historically black college libraries. Even in the latter, many positions for faculty, librarians, and administrators were filled by whites. Louis Shores is a notable example, having served as library director at Fisk University from 1928 to 1933. The President of Fisk at the time, who recruited Shores, was also white. There are many other such examples that negate any notion that African Americans could be librarians.31

Thus, education for librarianship evolved in a segregated fashion, and for the purpose of providing librarians to serve Negro populations in segregated library settings. Education to fulfill this need was often through certification programs at separate Negro branch libraries like that run by Thomas Fountain Blue at the Louisville Free Public Library. In this manner, training for black librarians was largely

31 Other examples include Margaret Burke, librarian in the 1930s at Xavier University and Nathaniel Stewart at Dillard University, both in New Orleans. Orvin Lee Shiflett, Louis Shores: Defining Educational Librarianship (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 17-42. Also see Steven R. Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association: Stumbling toward Integration,” Libraries & Culture 38, no. 4 (2003): 324-325.
seen by the white professional establishment as a vocational venture, running counter to the prevailing movement towards professional credentials until the historically black Hampton Institute established a library program in 1925, offering a bachelor’s degree. ALA was intimately involved in the founding of the Hampton library program and later its closure in 1939, in favor of the graduate program in librarianship at Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) in 1941. The transition of ALA endorsement from Hampton to Atlanta entailed a bit of strife between Louis Shores (who wanted the program moved to Fisk) and ALA secretary, Carl Milam, ALA’s regional field agent for the South, Tommie Dora Barker, and University of Chicago Dean (and former UNC Chapel Hill Librarian) Louis Round Wilson. Throughout the conflict, however, little effort was made to solicit African American input on the decision, which was not much different than the scenario when the Hampton program had been established. Hampton’s program had been under the direction of white librarian Florence Rising Curtis. The Atlanta program had three preeminent (or soon to be) African American librarians: Eliza Atkins Gleason (dean of the program), Wallace Van Jackson, and Virginia Lacy Jones. Hampton, Atlanta, and the library certificate programs were all demonstrations of the impulse toward “separate but equal” education for African Americans. Despite the success of some African American librarians like Eliza Gleason and Dorothy Porter (and later Jones herself) at graduate programs outside the South, others were not especially encouraged or welcome to attend. The director of the University of Michigan program, in response to an inquiry about the admission of Negroes, responded that “their presence is a distinct embarrassment.” The University of Chicago graduate library program was one of the few that had a track record of admitting African Americans and generating research that documented the needs of African American library users.

Even during the years following World War II, when there was a marked shortage of librarians, ALA made no particular effort at recruiting racial and ethnic minorities into the profession. No doubt,

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32 In a campus report, Shores overstated the support he already had from ALA and various charitable foundations. His plans for a Negro librarian conference without ALA approval, described later in this paper, also shifted sentiment away from Fisk, as described in Robert Sidney Martin and Orvin Lee Shiflett, “Hampton, Fisk, and Atlanta: The Foundations, the American Library Association, and Library Education for Blacks, 1925–1941,” Libraries & Culture 31, no. 2 (1996): 299–325.

33 William W. Bishop to Miss Anita M. Hostetter, 23 April 1929, American Library Association Archives, quoted in Du Mont, “Race in American Librarianship,” 492.
ALA was right to encourage the education of African Americans in the South at institutions close to home, but this plan came about in part because the will did not exist within the organization to encourage the admission of African American students to library programs outside the South.\textsuperscript{34}

The reversal of separate but equal by the \textit{Brown} decision ultimately impacted segregated library education programs, but the transition was uneven, and one can question if true integration was ever completed. In 1966, ALA formed an ad hoc committee to investigate access to education only after the \textit{Civil Rights Act of 1964}, twelve years after \textit{Brown}. The committee found that less than five percent of library program graduates in the preceding five years were African American and that more than half of these were from the Atlanta program. (This appears to be a slight improvement from 1940, based on survey data from 1938, when Van Jackson reported that 72\% of the African American graduates of library programs were from Hampton.) The 1966 committee report recommended the recruitment of African American candidates into library programs throughout the country to make them fully integrated. This planned seemed to have a temporary effect. African American graduation from library programs rose during the late 1960s and early 1970s but tailed off considerably after that.\textsuperscript{35} ALA has maintained an agenda for the recruitment of minorities since this time, but a search of articles on the topic in \textit{American Libraries} is sadly repetitive. The same arguments have yielded the same poor results.

\textbf{Access to Professional Associations and Conferences}

If gaining access to the library profession through formal education programs was difficult for African Americans, then continuing to pursue professional development within library organizations proved equally so. As with the development of library education, the white establishment within librarianship was loath to admit minority librarians into the professional fraternity as full participants. As


previously noted, before 1964, even while striving to overcome unequal library services, professional activities for African American librarians were essentially separate. This is illustrated in many ways by the ALA’s Work With Negroes Round Table, not least of which is the name of the organization, which speaks of exclusion and the establishment of an “other,” rather than inclusion of African American professionals. The primary instigator of the Round Table was Ernestine Rose, whose concern and knowledge, as the head of the NYPL Harlem branch, cannot be questioned, but she was, nonetheless, white. Louis Shores was also active in the group. Most of the participants were white. At the Detroit meeting of the Round Table in 1922, Thomas Fountain Blue, the only African American in attendance, read a paper about the training program at Louisville. The Round Table existed for 3 years, 1921-1923, but, as Louis Shores notes, “inter-sectional feeling ran so high that no further attempts at organization were made.” Jenkins (1990) suggests that Ernestine Rose’s activist style was in conflict with the “go-along-to-get-along” methods of the Southern librarians. Sadly, there are no transcripts of those discussions.

Despite the demise of the Work With Negroes Round Table, ALA set out to develop a better gauge of library services to African Americans and the staffing needs of Negro library services in public libraries around the country. At the same time that the Hampton program was gearing up to launch in 1925, a letter of inquiry was sent by ALA to 34 libraries in 17 states dispersed across the South, Northeast, and Midwest. (No Western states were polled.) Twenty-six libraries responded. A common theme in the responses was the difficulty in recruiting qualified African American librarians to work in segregated service branches, and the need for greater access to education. More remarkable, however, is the lack of compunction about commenting on the fitness of the African American staff in what we today could only call racist terms—and of ALA’s willingness to present these responses in a public document. Imagine the feelings of the Little Rock, Arkansas assistant who may have read that she was “well liked and trusted, not of ‘pushy’ variety.” These kinds of responses were not limited to the South. The Minneapolis report stated that the African American assistants were “very sensible and non-aggressive.” Though the services were reported to have no segregation, of these assistants it was said the library intended to “keep them from immediate contact

with public in justice to them and to spare prejudices of public.”38

Other documents of African American librarianship throughout the twentieth century reflect similar paternalistic attitudes by the white establishment towards black colleagues. Woodson’s narrative from the 1930s about black professionals describes a scenario common in Negro branch libraries where the service was ostensibly managed by an African American librarian, but the decisions of this person were often contravened by the (white) central library management, or where advisory boards for Negro branches attempted to recommend qualified African Americans for librarian positions, but were thwarted by that management.39

These kinds of frustrating interactions held sway in professional associations as well. Conversations about the desegregation of library organizations were liable to degenerate into little more than race-baiting. “Who is stuffing these Negroes down our throats?” asked W. S. Hoole, the Librarian of the University of Alabama, during one organizational discussion of whether steps towards integration should be taken by the Alabama Library Association.40 In another example, the “Libraries for Negroes” column of the Bulletin of the Louisiana Library Association, published during the 1930s and 1940s, was edited at all times by white librarians, even in cases where they worked at historically black colleges. In one instance, the white editor writes with frustration in the column about the difficulty of getting news updates from Negro library services and questions whether the librarians there are too “lazy” to send reports.41 Surely, that attitude discouraged any sense of collegiality among the target audience, though truthfully, they were probably not readers of the Bulletin anyway because few were members of the Louisiana Library Association. The Black Librarian in American reports many more instances of racist attitudes: E.J. Josey summarizes a few of these situations in the introduction of the book, such as when a white library school student felt “concern” about being taught by an African American, an African American job candidate was asked if she knew “how to talk to white folks,” and a white library

user went to great lengths to avoid the African American librarian when reference needs arose.\textsuperscript{42}

Professional organizational activities were \textit{obviously}, though not \textit{necessarily}, segregated in the South. No law or statute in the South actually compelled the segregation of professional organizations.\textsuperscript{43} The use of any public facilities, however, was constrained by both \textit{de jure} and \textit{de facto} segregation. Though many library organizations in the South claimed to have no restrictions on membership, African-American librarians were rarely made to feel welcome at committee meetings, conferences, or, especially, social activities. Hotels, restaurants, schools, and public buildings were all operated under strict Jim Crow cultural norms. Little if any effort was made by organizations to hold meetings in places where segregation did not hold sway. But just as library services in other parts of the country were equally segregated, so too library associations were nearly equally so. Under these conditions, most African-American librarians chose not to participate in the “white” library association.\textsuperscript{44} As in other professions, African Americans developed their own professional associations. In some states there were separate library organizations for Blacks, but in several states African American librarians organized themselves within their respective segregated education associations. In Louisiana, for example, the Louisiana Colored Teachers’ Association (later, though still segregated, called the Louisiana Education Association) had a “libraries” division in which public, school, and academic librarians were members. Georgia and Virginia had similar arrangements within the black teachers’ organizations.\textsuperscript{45} Librarianship was different in this regard from teaching, law, and medicine, in that a national-level Negro association did not form independent of the prevailing (white) library association. Organization was strictly at a state and local level.

Soon after the founding of the Hampton library program, Thomas Fountain Blue of the Louisville Free Public Library collaborated with the school to organize the Negro Library Conference, held March 15-18, 1927 in Hampton, Virginia. Blue provided the keynote address on the topic of “arousing community interest in the library.”\textsuperscript{46} Three years later, from June 14 to July 25, 1930, a “Library Institute” for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} E. J. Josey, ed., \textit{The Black Librarian in America} (Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1970), ix-x.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association,” 335.
\item \textsuperscript{45} E. J. Josey and Marva L. DeLoach, \textit{Handbook of Black Librarianship} (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 51-57.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Wright, “Thomas Fountain Blue,” 26-27.
\end{itemize}
African Americans, funded by the Rosenwald Foundation, was held at Morehouse College in Atlanta. It was a training program rather than a conference, but further served to establish ties within the African American library community.\(^{47}\) Another Negro Library Conference was held in 1931, this time at Fisk University, planned by Louis Shores. Because of his previous conflict with them, Shores’ idea for this conference was looked upon with suspicion by the powers of ALA. ALA executive secretary, Carl Milam, writing to Tommie Dora Barker about the plans for the conference, said, “This looks like a stick of dynamite to me.” Barker, Milam, and others in the ALA upper echelons felt that negro library development must be conducted within (if not subordinate to) the larger library development plan they had in mind. Milam managed to get Shores and Barker together in a meeting, where the schedule for the program became “whiter,” as it were. No African American input was sought.\(^{48}\)

It was in these kinds of circumstances that ALA held its annual conference of 1936 in Richmond, Virginia. After the Richmond conference, many non-Southern attendees were struck by the segregated nature of the event. Although there were African Americans in attendance, they were made to sit separately in most auditoriums and meeting rooms and they were not allowed to attend any meal events. An editorial from outside the profession posed the question, “Why should any civilized association, with Negro members, undertake to hold such a convention in Virginia or any other state that makes such distinctions?” Members of the Association raised objections as well, voicing their disapproval in the Library Journal and other professional publications. The result was the formation of the ALA Committee on Discrimination. Based on a report of the Committee, a resolution of ALA Council was passed later that year which required that conference facilities recognize the “full equality” of all members. The resolution, in essence, forbade the use by the ALA of facilities or locations that would require observation of Jim Crow laws. (See Du Mont, for an extended examination of these events.)\(^{49}\) Although this made a statement about the rights of African-American librarians within the ALA, it said nothing about the rights


in general of those librarians within their own communities or local library associations, thus maintaining some element of acquiescence to local practice. ALA would avoid those conference locations that clung most particularly to Jim Crow, but it did not speak out about the provision of library services or the treatment of librarians within those segregated communities.

It should be noted that ALA had held its annual conference in Southern cities eight times prior to Richmond, ten, if one counts the thoroughly segregated St. Louis of the time. Few, if any, in the library establishment made note of those transgressions at the time, though the African American library population had already made their own accommodations through other professional conferences.

It was almost 20 years before ALA made any additional efforts to enforce a level of equal rights within the Association. In 1954, a revision of the bylaws restricted states to a single ALA chapter organization. This meant that both white and Negro chapters would not be permitted to serve as affiliates of ALA in representing a single state, in hopes that the notion of separate but equal library associations could be squashed. The Negro chapter in North Carolina dissolved itself to allow the historically white NCLA to seek ALA chapter status.\(^{50}\) (I do not think the story has yet been fully told of the level of equality held by African American librarians after that action in North Carolina and the other states whose Negro state chapters of ALA were dissolved.) Alabama and Georgia could not come to any agreement about a single state chapter, and, thus, chose not to seek recertification of their status as ALA chapters.\(^{51}\) Some states like Louisiana, although their state ALA chapters were not truly integrated, did not have separate associations for Blacks, and thus flew under the radar of ALA for several more years.

After \textit{Brown}, as the growing level of protest in the Civil Rights Movement began to infiltrate the national consciousness, many librarians also became more sensitive to inequalities within the profession. One of these, Eli M. Oboler, chief librarian at Idaho State University, undertook an informal study to survey other professional associations about their integration policies, asking especially whether attendance at conferences was integrated. Responses were received from American

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Chemical Society, American Dental Association, American Association of University Professors, The American Institute of Architects, American Psychological Association, American Medical Association, American Nurses’ Association, National Association of Social Workers, and National Education Association. Oboler saw some cause for hope in that ALA was not as “bad” as some of these organizations. He concluded his article with a question about whether “we as a profession are willing to stand up and be counted and assume the responsibilities which every profession worthy of the name should assume.”

As the 1960s dawned, African American activist librarians undertook a smoldering letter-writing campaign with various organizational leaders within both state associations and ALA itself, to demand access and participation. One result of this activism was that the Library Bill of Rights was amended by the Association in 1961 to include the statement, “The right of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his race, religion, national origins or political views.” Here, the ALA was finally taking a stance about the provision of library services on a national scale, and not making allowances for local practice. The ALA, however, had little power to enforce the right, and in truth did little to persuade member libraries or organizations to integrate their services. In 1960, the ALA executive board also directed the Intellectual Freedom Committee to inquire more pointedly whether Southern ALA chapters were, in fact, fully open to all librarians. The IFC got tepid responses from the states. Ironically, in the Fall of 1961, Florrinell Morton from Louisiana took office as the President of ALA. The survey of black participation had revealed that the Louisiana Library Association (the state ALA chapter) was not truly integrated. The ALA executive board and the IFC went to some pains to insure that Morton was not too embarrassed during her Presidency by any ALA demands that her own state association integrate. In fact, the board report to ALA Council in January of 1962 continued to recommend a cautious and deliberate approach to chapter desegregation. The ALA Council response was immediate and negative. (Note of emphasis: the differences between the executive board and ALA Council is somewhat analogous to the differences between a national presidential cabinet and that nation’s

53 See especially the correspondence between Ernest Wagner, librarian at Dillard University, and LLA leaders, including Florrinell Morton, and then later, Wagner and ALA leadership, described in Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association,” 336-337.
(elected legislature.) Lawrence Powell called the report “monstrously cynical.” Jerome Cushman, from New Orleans, however, warned that a “social legislation” policy would result in the secession of Southern chapters. At the Annual conference of 1962 in Miami, the Council issued a “Statement on Chapters and Institutional Members,” which specified the particular rights all members of these organizations must be granted in order to maintain ALA affiliate status and gave no more than a three-year grace period for implementation. The LLA executive board asked for an indefinite extension, to which they received a firm “no.”

Both the Louisiana Library Association and the Mississippi Library Association were unable to meet the requirements of ALA chapter status and officially withdrew. The library associations in Alabama and Georgia had already withdrawn during the “single state chapter” process of 1954 but were also unable to meet the new ALA requirements of equality for all members. Again, it must be said in all these cases, that it was not that any state or local law required that the associations be segregated, but that Jim Crow gave white librarians the power and license to make it virtually impossible for African Americans to participate in these organizations without some mitigating efforts by anti-racist white members. By this time, the forces of Massive Resistance had also become so strong and visible, that many librarians feared to be the object of its wrath. New Orleans public schools, for example, had just recently been the object of widespread mob violence in 1961 after a court order for integration had been issued. In 1961, the Louisiana Attorney General also told teachers and librarians that they must resign from the National Education Association, as membership would violate a 1956 state law prohibiting participation in any organization that advocated integration. The story was similar across the Deep South. Public attempts at integration were met with angry resistance.

Another product of the 1962 conference in Miami was that ALA undertook a study to evaluate access to libraries throughout the country. The “Access Study,” published in 1963, became something of a hot-button topic for the association. It identified widespread abridgement of access based on race, including discrimination in many cities of the North and West. The authors of the report employed an interesting methodology (what today we might call GIS—geographic

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information systems) to point out that the placement of public libraries in many communities was segregated and racist, regardless of whether the facilities themselves were integrated. The study was roundly criticized by the profession from all points of the compass. It seemed that librarians outside of the South did not like having it pointed out that their services were not integrated either. Three months after the release of the report, the advisory committee for the study issued a retraction of sorts, saying that “the use of … the report be limited and that no generalizations be made about the cities studied.” In the end, no concrete actions were generated by the report, but it did serve to further highlight equal access as a national issue.58

The secession of the four Southern library associations (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi) continued throughout 1963 and 1964. In 1964, the Mississippi Library Association won an ALA award for its National Library Week program. How this was possible is not clear, being unaffiliated, but it stimulated a great deal of anger about the hypocrisy of ALA. Georgia librarian E. J. Josey became further distressed when he learned that ALA officers had recently attended the Georgia Library Association Conference, which Josey himself, as an African American, could not attend. These events demonstrated the indifference and lack of recognition of the problem by ALA governance. Josey presented these issues to the ALA Council at the 1964 annual conference and a resolution was quickly fashioned, which prohibited ALA officers from taking part in segregated activities.59 Although Josey and others remember this as the last stand of segregation in Southern library associations, segregation continued to exist in the Southern associations throughout the fall of 1964 and into 1965.

Coincidentally, during the ALA conference of 1964, a civil rights bill had finally worked its way through the U.S. Congress and was signed into law as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on July 2 by President Lyndon Johnson. This bill was certainly applauded by many librarians who were interested in the spread of equality throughout the profession, but the full import for Southern librarians may not have been immediately apparent. The law made the segregation of public accommodations and public spaces, including libraries, illegal. Fear of

change (and perhaps racism) still lingered among Southern librarians. ALA officers immediately began writing to the leaders of the Southern associations expressing belief that the “obstacles” to chapter status had been removed, but most of the officers of the Southern associations did nothing throughout the Fall of 1964. Finally, in the spring of 1965, the separate Southern associations recognized the new order of things and began to submit requests to ALA for chapter recognition. The conflict between ALA and its state chapters was over at that point, but issues of participation and recognition persisted.\(^6^0\)

Most librarians, including those in the South, are public employees, serving at the will of the public, as it were. Therefore, local Jim Crow laws always exerted great force over library services in the South. Although segregation did not directly govern professional organizations, librarians were loath to behave professionally in ways that ran counter to local racist custom. This became even more evident during the violent spasms of Massive Resistance in the late 1950s. Thus, librarians’ places of employment in the South were segregated and their professional organizations remained so as well. Although many worked behind the scenes to improve the provision of library services to African Americans, few white librarians in the South stood up in public to declare their opposition to segregation. In this, librarians were no different than other professionals, including educators, lawyers, and doctors. What the Civil Rights Act accomplished was the outlawing of the culture of segregation. The law forbade segregation in the places where librarians were employed, but it also forbade employment discrimination itself. Another carrot (or stick) it held out, was that federal money would be denied to entities that continued to discriminate.\(^6^1\) When the culture of segregation was toppled, the need to maintain professional segregation also came down. This change did not happen instantly, of course, and the racism that drove segregation simply changed its ways to be more covert. The presidential elections of 1964, immediately after the Civil Rights Act had been signed, saw the states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi (the same states that had seceded from ALA) cast majority votes for Barry Goldwater, who ran on a platform, essentially, of outrage over the Act. Even in 1966, there were still segregated public libraries in Louisiana, in complete defiance of the Law. After a sit-in protest in 1964 (before the Civil Rights Act was signed), one Louisiana public library closed altogether, rather than offer integrated service. (Brown v. Louisiana) But at last, with the ability to conduct organizational

\(^{60}\) Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association,” 343.

business in non-segregated ways, Southern library associations gradually saw an increase in African American membership. All the psychological barriers took longer to dissolve and perhaps have not yet completely disappeared. As with many aspects of American culture, the degree to which full integration and true equality have developed within the library profession remains to be seen.

Though a separate national library organization for African Americans, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) was founded in 1968 to address some of these ongoing issues of professional participation. E. J. Josey, the guiding influence in the foundation of the group, later wrote:

Those black professionals in every discipline who were members of national professional organizations realized at the close of the 1960s that white racism was embedded in their professional organizations. They further saw that, if black people were to have an impact on their professions and their professional development, it was necessary for them to band together, in a black caucus or an all-black organization, in order to ensure their contributions to the liberation of black people in general, and the liberation of themselves as professionals, in particular.62

He writes further, “that ALA would not adequately respond to the needs of black professionals and that the Black Caucus would give professional black librarians a chance to take control of their professional destinies.” As Josey notes, the BCALA had an early germ in alumni dinners hosted by the Atlanta University library program. Its full birth from 1968 to 1970 was driven primarily by a desire to nominate black candidates for ALA offices. The initial effort with candidate Albert Marshall was unsuccessful in 1971. In 1976, one hundred years after its founding, ALA elected an African American librarian, Clara Stanton Jones, to its presidential office.63 During Jones’ term, ALA adopted the “Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness” which had been proposed by the Social Responsibilities Round Table, and read in part, “…ALA has professed belief in the principle of equality yet has failed to aggressively address the racism and sexism within its own professional province…”64 Five African Americans have been elected to ALA’s presidential post as of 2017 (and two Hispanic librarians and one Native American).

The BCALA has held its National Conference of African


63 Ibid., 68.

American Librarians (Culture Keepers) ten times since 1992. A Joint Conference of Librarians of Color has been held two times (2006 and 2012), and an organization incorporated itself as the Joint Council of Librarians of Color in 2015, and has held three national conferences as of 2018.65

Access to Publishing

As an addendum here, the history of access to professional publication venues by African American librarians is a short, sad story. An examination of American Libraries and its previous titles shows no record of authorship for noted African American authors such as Thomas Fountain Blue, Daniel Murray, George Forbes, Eliza Gleason, or Ann Allen Shockley. One will, on the other hand, see many works by their white contemporaries such as William Yust, Louis Shores, Louis Round Wilson, and Jesse Shera. This, of course, is not necessarily a reflection of exclusion (Shockley chose to publish in literary journals, for example), but the absence of African American voices in the organizational venue is telling. The Library Quarterly did publish Gleason and other authors on topics of African American interest. Many articles about libraries were also published in Journal of Negro Education and Journal of Negro History. Phylon, published by Atlanta University, was also friendly to library topics. Since the 1970s, Josey and others have had greater success in the book publishing market. American Libraries is now much more open to work by minority authors on race- and ethnic-focused topics, and the Internet creates space for alternative voices through blogs and social media, but still there is no national level journal from the voices of librarians of color.

Conclusions

The history of librarianship in the United States is a history of exclusion, by the white majority, of African Americans from the activities of the profession, and the subsequent creation of separate African American professional institutions and activities. The white majority took an active role in excluding African Americans from four important elements of professionalism: the means of professional education, participation in professional organizations, meaningful attendance at professional conferences, and access to venues for publication. Since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 overt forms of exclusion have been eliminated, but the history of paternalism and racism have never been widely acknowledged or resolved. Adoption of Cultural

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Humility, as developed in the healthcare professions, could serve to make librarianship a more inclusive, healthier profession. Hook, et al. (2013) observe in the psychotherapy environment that the “therapist must be able to overcome the natural tendency to view one’s own beliefs, values, and worldview as superior, and instead be open to the beliefs, values, and worldview of the diverse client.” Gallardo (2013), similarly, describes cultural humility as “a lifelong process of self-reflection, self-critique, continual assessment of power imbalances, and the development of mutually respectful relationships and partnerships.” Gallardo further notes (and any casual consumption of the news confirms) that our notions of a post-racial society are entirely false. He describes his own disappointment within the psychology profession, upon reading in professional discussion lists job announcements asking for Spanish language proficiencies only to see those ads mocked online, ostensibly by colleagues, and to see the people who remark that the comments are racist get attacked for being irrational or too sensitive—their views dismissed and devalued.

It is part of our failed narrative of diversity and inclusion in librarianship that we are shocked to learn that similar things happen in the online venues of our profession. In “Library Think Tank” (ALATT), the largest library group on Facebook, a member recently posted to describe the group as racist. The ensuing responses were more vitriol than discussion, with many commenters quick to denigrate the original post as “trolling” and espouse a “not all white people” defensiveness. Whether or not the post was trolling, these kinds of responses harken back to arguments around the ALA Access study of 1963 about whether library services outside the South could possibly be racist, or to the paternalistic responses from the white library leadership to African American plans for library development in the 1930s. They might more appropriately be called cultural hubris, rather than cultural humility. We are also shocked to learn that these kinds of racist actions still happen at face-to-face meetings of ALA conferences. ALA councilor April Hathcock was verbally attacked by a fellow councilor in public at a Council Forum meeting during the 2019 ALA Midwinter conference. Her attacker described her as a

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67 Ibid., 14.

hypocrite, unprofessional [emphasis mine], and a “nightmare” because of her outspoken assessment of racism in librarianship. She received no support from those in attendance at the meeting and also was later visited by ALA legal counsel, who attempted to make her downplay the incident. The ALA Executive Board later issued a statement condemning the actions of the attacker and pledging to take steps to improve the environment for diversity and inclusion, although stating that “[t]his work can be messy” may not have struck the supportive tone they intended. The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL—a division of ALA) also issued a statement, saying, “Our profession needs to talk about the way that racism and systems that privilege whiteness have permeated our profession and our professional events.”

Yet, there has been talking. There have been initiatives to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion like those directed by the ALA Office of Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS) and the ACRL Diversity Alliance. These do not touch the heart of continued prejudice and racism within the profession. Librarianship needs a stronger response. “To achieve critical consciousness,” as Gallardo writes, “we need to understand race with our current discourse and enhance our understanding of what this means to individuals and communities.”

The success of this kind of reconciliation would depend on being widely discussed and recognized within the profession, rather than just being fodder for research by a few historians. While the existence of diversity committees and offices dispersed across all divisions and sections of ALA is valuable, the work of reconciliation needs to be the central and sole task of a single office or commission. As in South Africa, this commission should be charged with a two-pronged approach to reconciliation: making the past and present nature of our racism visible and giving voice to those who are harmed and recognizing their value and dignity within the profession. The commission should also have extensive and varied avenues for publication, including those that are


unique to the commission and those that reach the entire membership, such as *American Libraries*. Some of this task is addressed by the ALA Council “Resolution to Honor African Americans Who Fought Library Segregation,” adopted in June, 2018, which recognizes the contributions of librarians engaged in the struggle for civil rights and acknowledges the guilt of ALA in the disenfranchisement of African American professionals. Yet this charge needs to be an ongoing commitment, not a single resolution. The charge also needs to be separate and differentiated from outreach and recruitment, whose tone often goes something like, “If only you knew us better, you would recognize what a wonderful profession we are.” Recognizing that we are NOT a wonderful profession for most racial groups would be an important first step in making us a better profession. Only through an honest process of truth and humility can librarianship in the United States hope to attain a state of reconciliation with all of its colleagues and potential colleagues. A commission for reconciliation could help bring us to a state of clarity about ourselves and provide a path toward healing that would make us a more whole and inclusive profession.
This paper critically examines the concept of intellectual freedom (IF) and the central role it plays in the U.S. library and information science (LIS) profession, challenging the concept’s assumed basis in neutrality and demonstrating the active barrier it presents in its current implementation to existing and future social justice efforts. The paper argues that if LIS is to move from making ineffective calls for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to actively working for justice within and beyond the field, then it must adopt an understanding of IF that fundamentally considers the sociohistorical context of power in LIS, the United States, and the world.

**IF and Neutrality in the ALA’s Codes of Ethics**

Though the American Library Association (ALA) has codified EDI in its main ethical frameworks – the 1996 Library Bill of Rights (LBR) and the 2008 Code of Ethics (COE) – it is reluctant to explicitly outline which groups of people are intended to benefit from these initiatives, much less the societal power structures underlying the need for them. This reluctance means that, rather than facilitating LIS work toward social justice for oppressed peoples, the ALA’s EDI efforts are absorbed into a framework of “neutral” IF which demands that LIS workers not enact policies or otherwise take actions that fall outside the status quo on an organizational or national level. In contrast to

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Keywords: intellectual freedom; power; social justice; history of libraries; neutrality
EDI, IF plays a crucial role in the ALA’s main ethical frameworks, which represent the ideological hold IF has on the profession.

Both the LBR and COE define the basic principles that the ALA has determined should govern the operations of all U.S. libraries and the conduct of all U.S. LIS workers. Five out of the six articles in the LBR relate to IF (Knox, “IF” 11) while the entirety of the COE is devoted to “translat[ing] the values of intellectual freedom that define the profession of librarianship into broad principles” (COPE, emphasis added). The emphasis the ALA places on IF within the organization’s two primary sets of ethical guidelines suggests that it has been chosen as the guiding principle of U.S. LIS above all others, even if it does not always translate into professional practice (Knox, “Supporting IF” 17-18).

Though the ALA’s Office of IF only explicitly addresses censorship, access, filtering, shared physical spaces, and the rights of children, IF’s priority role in the ALA’s principles means that it has come to encompass many more issues than those listed—including EDI. The LBR’s articles allude to this issue in their assertions that library resources should be provided for “all people of the community the library serves,” and that library facilities should be made “available on an equitable basis.” Similarly, the COE mandates that libraries enact “equitable service policies” and ensure “equitable access.” This equity-as-access-for-all language is reflected in the mission of the ALA’s Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS), which states the office’s aim to support LIS workers “in creating responsible and all-inclusive spaces that serve and represent the entire community.” While undoubtedly well-intentioned, the ALA’s framework through which to work toward EDI assumes that, as long as everyone in a library’s community has the IF to access the information they seek and express themselves based on it, the library will adequately serve the diverse needs of its patrons. However, this assumption fundamentally misunderstands the differences between equality, equity, and justice.

The ALA’s IF-based praxis toward EDI ironically rests on principles of equality rather than equity (not to mention justice), presuming that everyone will benefit from the same supports regardless of their societal positionings of race, class, gender, sexuality, or ability. In contrast, an equity-based model understands that different peoples require varying kinds or levels of support due to the barriers they face to equal access or opportunity. However, neither equality nor equity models go so far as to call for the removal of the underlying source of the barriers. A framework which does make such a call is a justice-based one, which seeks to address the systemic roots of societal inequities and thus eliminate the need to provide any specialized supports (“Equality versus Equity”).

Following a vibrant tradition of social justice-focused LIS scholarship
and praxis, this paper proposes a justice-based understanding of IF which facilitates the information-seeking and expressive behavior of those who have historically faced systemic oppression under the material and ideological hegemony in which LIS developed, with the ultimate goal of dismantling the sources of such oppression. This understanding is decidedly non-neutral, instead taking the position that because similarly non-neutral dominant ideologies formed and continue to shape not only LIS but the broader historical record (Morales, Knowles, & Bourg 445–446), LIS should take a longer view of history and power in order to determine what policies and practices would turn the library into a space truly representative of the diversity of knowledge that exists in their communities and beyond. To do so requires an understanding of the historical trajectory that gave birth to IF in LIS.

**Historical Development of IF in U.S. LIS**

The current dominant conception of IF in LIS and beyond is one which claims neutrality in giving equal weight to all information and viewpoints regardless of the power structures behind them. This view neglects to acknowledge the inherently political reasons why LIS adopted neutrality and IF as the conjoined guiding principles of the profession, and the specific (groups of) people these principles were meant to serve at different points in the profession’s development.

The original goal of U.S. librarianship was to promote “good” books in order to cultivate an “enlightened” citizenry with “moral” character and behavior, based on an established social order dominated by white supremacy, misogyny, and capitalism (Knox, “Supporting IF” 15; Wiegand 101). Though the principle of IF was not present in early librarianship, this era of “good” book promotion is vital in demonstrating the oppressions that institutional neutrality can and has engendered.

Colonizers founded the profession of U.S. librarianship in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, setting up over seventy literary centers to encourage indoctrination into Anglican values among settler colonialists and the indigenous people whose lands they violently stole (Wiegand 100). By the middle of the nineteenth century, a wave of industrialization and immigration washed over the U.S., prompting much hand-wringing among Anglo-Saxon Protestants at the head of the country’s social order that their status quo was under attack by foreign brown savages (102). Universal literacy was offered as a solution and implemented by these same power holders in the growing community of early U.S. libraries, whose collections “reflected the cultural, literary, and intellectual canons [that the white, wealthy settlers] had found useful in constructing their own interpretations of reality,” yet were framed as containing universally “good” works (102).
Alongside the Enlightenment-based conceptions of “goodness” that dominated early U.S. librarianship, those in charge of libraries promoted the violent assimilation of indigenous people and immigrants into U.S. culture through processes of “Americanization” (“A History”), the social management of women through paying them far less than men and preventing them from advancing in one of the only fields that allowed for their employment (Wiegand 103), and the segregation of libraries, emboldened by Plessy v. Ferguson’s 1896 “separate but equal” ruling and upheld throughout and after the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s (“A History”). In other words, under the guise of morality-based neutrality, U.S. libraries in this era were champions of dominant power structures responsible for the oppression of people of color, women, and anyone else deemed immoral. LIS workers today should thus be wary of assertions of neutrality in the field, not only questioning who benefits and suffers from the structures upholding such neutrality but actively working to center the information needs of those impacted by past and current masks of neutrality.

IF did not come to guide contemporary LIS until the World War II era, when those in LIS saw it as their professional duty to take a clear political stance against Hitler’s dictatorship and in support of democratic values (Robbins 28-29). One year after social scientist Bernard Berelson called upon librarians in 1938 to “stand firmly against social and political and economic censorship of book collections” in light of fascism’s worldwide attack on democracy, the ALA Council adopted the first manifestation of the LBR and so codified IF into the principles of LIS (qtd. in Robbins 29). It is critical to emphasize here that IF arose in LIS as a form of direct opposition to fascism, signaling the inherently political original purpose of the now neutralized principle and setting a precedent for a re-politicized praxis of IF towards social justice today.

Unfortunately, the anti-fascist stance originally at the heart of IF soon gave way to a neutrality-based conception of the principle, adopted with the express purpose of shielding LIS workers from criticism. Nine years after the initial adoption of the LBR, the ALA passed a revised version of the code in response to McCarthyist anti-Communist witch hunts undertaken by the Truman Administration through such venues as the House Un-American Activities Committee (Robbins 30). However, instead of acting on their reaffirmed principles by defending access to material deemed “communist propaganda,” LIS workers mobilized IF through the provision of “all points of view” as a defense mechanism against accusations of being a communist (Gluck). “All points of view,” though, often did not include those targeted by McCarthyism, as demonstrated through the Library of Congress’
firing of queer people and anyone with “communist sensibilities” (Gluck). In this era, LIS was much more concerned with protecting its professional legitimacy than it was with standing in solidarity with those targeted by U.S. power structures.

This neutrality-based intellectual-freedom-as-professional-defense ideology pervades LIS today, resting on a hegemonic assumption in the social sciences that in order to do legitimate work in a field, practitioners must emphasize “empirical measurement, quantifiable data, and scientific ‘objectivity’” (Robbins 31). As Jensen notes, social science practitioners can typically be considered truly neutral – and thus legitimate – only if they “accept and replicate the dominant ideology” (30); otherwise, they are often deemed “biased” or accused of having a political agenda. Library historian Michael Harris has asserted that LIS workers have been particularly vulnerable to uncritically supporting oppressive power structures through IF due to their continual struggle to assert themselves as professionals (qtd. in Robbins 29-30). However, if LIS praxis is to remain relevant in a rapidly changing information landscape, it must cease to simply follow in the process of social change (Wiegand 99) and instead be an active participant by directly addressing social issues (Sparanese 45).

Both the LIS profession as a whole and its primary codified principle of IF grew to prominence out of particular sociohistorical contexts and clear political stances. The field’s development suggests that it is able to effectively lead struggles of justice-based social change when openly acknowledging the political aims of its IF, but only able to uphold dominant power structures when shrouding such aims under the guise of neutrality. The next section will more concretely explore what a praxis of IF actively informed by sociohistorical power structures and striving for social justice could look like.

**Towards a Sociohistorically Informed IF**

LIS must move from a praxis of IF which neutralizes efforts of EDI to one which actively, explicitly, and unapologetically works toward justice in solidarity with coworkers, patrons, and community members against the oppressive societal power structures that have shaped the LIS profession throughout its history. As Iverson notes, systemic inequities not only limit access to information resources in varying degrees for all those except society’s most powerful, but dictate who is able to create the majority of the pool of resources that ultimately end up in libraries (16). Our LIS praxis should seek to address what Frické, Mathiesen, and Fallis call this society-wide “macrocensorship” (475) through a sociohistorical model of IF that emphasizes access and knowledge creation among those disproportionately excluded from them.

This shift in IF allows for a number of things. First, it makes
possible increased representation of people of color, LGBTQ people, people in poverty, and people with disabilities in the LIS workforce—which, as of 2012 is 88 percent white and 96 percent able-bodied (ALA ORS, ALA ODLOS, & Decision Demographics). This potential is in line with the way the ALA conceptualizes diversity (“Key Action Areas”). Yet a justice-based, sociohistorically informed IF doesn’t seek to simply achieve this representation, but to break down the societal barriers preventing it. Second, the shift paves the way for LIS institutions to more actively engage with the communities in which they’re embedded, and to work in their interests instead of against them—especially, as Gibson et al note, when those communities are in crisis (751). This function of libraries as important community centers has been well established by LIS workers (Jaeger et al) and patrons (Horrigan) alike. Third, and arguably most importantly, the shift encourages a rejection of paternalistic and implicitly capitalistic models of “service” in favor of one of solidarity, through which LIS workers recognize their interests as intimately bound up with those of their patrons and work to break down (or at least complicate) the LIS worker-patron divide. In doing so, LIS workers can realize that we too face exploitation at the hands of the systems responsible for the oppression experienced by patrons, forming a strong basis of solidarity.

A sociohistorically informed IF does not, however, call for LIS spaces to exclude dominant forms of knowledge, resources which represent or endorse systemic forms of oppression, or staff members or patrons who are not part of the communities historically marginalized by the LIS profession and society at large. Instead, it shifts the focus of LIS spaces away from these entities, contextualizing the first two in ways that acknowledge their non-neutrality as upholders of a dominant (if not oppressive) status quo. This shift—not-exclusion framework rests on a contemporary socialist understanding of free speech, which recognizes that institutional protocols of restricting or banning speech have been and continued to be used in service of oppressive power structures. It also recognizes that hateful speech will not go away simply if it is banned, for such speech is a symptom of the power structures which uphold the systemic oppressions in our society (Dols). Further, if LIS spaces are to paint an accurate picture of history and the factors underlying the development and perpetuation of systems of oppression, we will have to make available dominant forms of knowledge and resources which are representative of societal power structures. None of these considerations, however, mandate an emphasis on such materials, and prompt their contextualization in a manner that reflects a sociohistorically informed framework of IF.

Such contextualization may be interpreted as violating the
ALA’s statement against labeling (ALA Council, “Interpretations”), which was justly formed in the postwar era in response to the superpatriotic group Sons of the American Revolution who demanded that libraries label and restrict “subversive” literature and keep a roster of patrons who used it (Robbins 35). Yet this interpretation fails to recognize that two fundamental operations of LIS spaces – cataloging and classification – already constitute a form of institutionally sanctioned labeling that often reinforces oppressive power structures. For example, Library of Congress Classification (LCC) includes subject headings using the terms genocide, holocaust, and massacre when referring to Hitler’s extermination of Jews during World War II and other ethnically-motivated killing campaigns carried out by non-North American nations, but none which pair the three aforementioned terms with United States or Canada. The effect of this classification is to imply that genocide can only happen outside of the context of North America, erasing the mass murder of North American indigenous peoples on which the U.S. was built and perpetuating the myth of American exceptionalism (Dudley 19). Clearly, LIS workers have long accepted the inevitability of contextualizing resources, but have typically done so in a manner that goes unnoticed since it upholds the societal status quo. A sociohistorically informed IF seeks not to abolish cataloging and classification, but to approach such processes in a way that stands in solidarity with those historically and currently marginalized.

The above outline upon which a principle of sociohistorically informed, justice-based IF can be built does not aim to be prescriptive, but rather to offer a concrete framework on which LIS workers can base their professional practices. The next and final section will recount examples of LIS workers acting toward justice against oppressive power structures in order to establish precedent for the sociohistorical IF this paper is proposing.

Conclusion: Past Social Justice Actions among LIS Workers
LIS workers throughout the profession’s history have taken clear stances against the discourse of neutrality which pervades the ALA’s dominant praxis of IF, acting in solidarity with those oppressed by societal power structures and recognizing their common interest in transforming society. These examples of justice-based LIS work demonstrate the ability, legitimacy, and efficacy of LIS workers to stake out explicit political positions in favor of a world free of systemic oppression.

After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, discrimination and segregation in U.S. public spaces – including libraries – continued, with several southern library associations refusing membership to Black people (Gibson et al 755). Later that same year, Black
librarian E.J. Josey proposed a resolution to the ALA to prevent members of segregated library associations from attending national ALA conferences, thus decreasing their influence in the profession. The resolution passed successfully, and effectively ended the *de jure* segregation of libraries in the U.S. Josey went on to found the Black Caucus in 1969, though the ALA did not consider the group as an affiliate until 1992 (Gluck).

A decade after Josey’s resolution passed, reference librarian Zoia Horn was jailed for her refusal to testify at the 1972 conspiracy trial of the Harrisburg Seven, a group of religious activists against the Vietnam War. An FBI informer was planted in Horn’s library at Bucknell University, and implicated other library personnel in the fabricated story against the Seven. Objecting to the idea that libraries could be used for government infiltration and surveillance, Horn went to jail for 20 days for contempt of court and could have remained there for three months if the trial had not been cut short. The ALA did not come to her support at any point in the process (Sparanese 45).

Forty years later, the Ferguson Municipal Public Library (FMLP) played an active role in Black Lives Matter following the police murder of unarmed Black teenager Michael Brown. The FMLP not only stayed open during the weeks-long protests, but focused its services on meeting the community’s immediate needs. These services included providing space for students when fall school openings were delayed, helping local businesses to apply for government aid, and offering materials on civil rights and mental health services to facilitate emotional healing (Gibson et al 756).

These examples of LIS political activism against systemic oppression demonstrate the power that we as LIS workers have to challenge existing power structures that enact daily violence on both our patrons and ourselves. In doing so LIS workers cannot expect that we won’t face backlash by those who want to see the status quo upheld, whether they’re patrons, external organizations, professional associations like the ALA, or the U.S. government. Indeed, the ALA has a long history of infringing upon the sociohistorically informed IF exercised by its own members. In addition to the ALA’s aforementioned failure to defend librarian Zoia Horn from unjust jailing, it similarly neglected to support librarian T. Ellis Hodgin in 1969 when he was fired and violently ostracized after joining a lawsuit against his daughter’s public school for requiring pupils to engage in religious practice. The next year, the ALA did not come to the aid of University of Minnesota librarian Michael McConnell, whose contract for employment was cancelled after he attempted to marry his same-sex partner (Asato 77). When the ALA does uphold principles of IF for its members, such as with its strong and overt
actions against the US PATRIOT Act, it does so on the basis of defending “neutral” ideals of democracy and free expression without taking a stance against the oppressive power structures bound up in the issues. With its advocacy surrounding the US PATRIOT Act, for example, the ALA failed to utter one word about the Islamophobia at the heart of the anti-terrorism legislation (ALA Washington Office; ALA Council, “Resolution”; Essex).

These examples demonstrate the need for rank-and-file LIS workers to forge a path of sociohistorically informed IF, regardless of the ALA’s actions or stated principles. With a large enough group of LIS workers committed to acting for justice and solidarity, united with and playing an active participatory role in the communities around us, we have the power to transform the profession and the world.

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Towards Universal Access to Knowledge
The Invisible Labor of Digitizing

By Yoonhee Lee

With digitization technologies, libraries and archives are able to share reproductions of books, photographs, archival documents and other cultural material to a wider audience beyond their physical walls. The excitement around digitization has sparked mass digitization projects and numerous national and international initiatives, which celebrate the idea of universal access to knowledge and information. As initial excitement waned, however, criticisms of these projects began to emerge. In particular, library scholars raised critical questions about copyright, poor metadata and quality, the lack of transparency, and ideologies of technological liberation with the Google Books Search project (Conway; Hoffmann and Bloom; Leetaru; Thylstrup). In addition, archival scholars pointed to privacy concerns and the ethics of circulating archival material online (Kandiuk; Robertson). What is lacking in these discussions, however, is an examination of the labor of digitization. The book scanners whose traces can be seen in the fingers and hands captured in error have been addressed in Andrew Norman Wilson’s Workers Leaving the Googleplex and ScanOps and Aliza Elkin’s Hand Job zine; however, further discussion and research is needed.

Looking at who does digitization labor and the context in which this labor takes place, I hope to situate the labor of digitizing books and archival material within larger discussions of the growth of invisible work and knowledge work and its exploitation under neoliberal capitalism. I will argue that within an economy of precarity, libraries and archives, as neoliberal institutions, are increasingly devaluing the

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labor of digitization through the use of the unpaid and underpaid labor and outsourced labor. With a closer examination of outsourced labor, I highlight how mass digitization involves factory-like industrial labor to produce knowledge commodities. In doing so, I demonstrate how the forces of neoliberalism, with its ideology of productivity and efficiency, have permeated into the realm of public service, knowledge, and cultural heritage.

**Digitization as knowledge work**

Digitization is a costly and labor-intensive endeavor for libraries and archives, but it (re)produces digital surrogates with not only immense cultural and research value, but market value as well. Digitization creates new knowledge products, which generate large investments (Conway 55). While some digitized products are available on the open web, others are only accessible through paid-subscriptions. Digitized collections increase the visibility and viability of knowledge organizations, helping to secure further funding in a climate of austerity (Moravec 187). In this market, users of digitized collections can be understood as consumers who have increasing demands and expectations for digitized material (Cifor and Lee 13). These users extract data from these digitized collections to produce new knowledge for the neoliberal academy.

Under the purview of knowledge, culture, and heritage industries, digitization is often associated with a public service or good. Instead of viewing digitization work through a lens that valorizes this labor, I position it as a form of exploited knowledge work under neoliberal capitalism. As Mosco and McKercher argue, the scope of knowledge work varies, from narrow interpretations that focus on the mobile creative class to expansive interpretations that encompass all workers involved in the creation and circulation of knowledge products. In defining knowledge work, Mosco and McKercher draw on Fritz Malchup’s typology of knowledge producers, which consists of creators, analyzers, interpreters, processors, transformers, and transporters (30-31). Within this framework, digitization labor includes all strata of knowledge work from software engineers who design digital collection platforms and systems, librarians and archivists who coordinate and interpret projects, to the scanners and technicians who process and transform digital surrogates.

Often, however, this labor is invisible to the users of digital collections. While researchers interact with archival staff when accessing physical collections, digital archival environments render these workers and their work invisible (Moravec 191). In particular, those who process and create the digital reproductions through scanning and metadata creation are hidden. Poster, Cherry, and Crain
conceptualize invisible labor as work that is “overlooked, ignored, and/or devalued by employers, consumers, workers, and ultimately the legal system itself.” (6). This framework views multiple forms of labor across class and social hierarchies that are invisible within capitalism, including call center workers, crowdsourced engineers, clerical workers, gig workers, and migrant farm workers. The labor of digitization, I argue is a similar invisible form of labor, which is devalued by employers (libraries and archives) and consumers (users) through the use of contingent underpaid and unpaid labor and increasingly outsourced labor. In viewing digitization under this umbrella, the ways in which capitalism has infiltrated the public sector can be examined. Although much of digitization labor is fueled by dedication to access and preservation of knowledge, as Ursula Huws argues, through standardization and commodification, capital transforms this labor of love and public service to exploited labor. Taking inspiration from scholarship that makes visible the labor of knowledge workers, such as Sarah Roberts’s research on commercial content moderators, I foreground and highlight the devalued and hidden labor of digitization.

**Hidden underpaid and unpaid labor**

Libraries and archives have not been immune to the demands of neoliberal capitalism, which has created an increase in precarious work, characterized by job insecurity, temporary and nonstandard work (Poster, Cherry, and Crain 11). Like other institutions, libraries and archives are turning to temporary contractual labor and unpaid internships. This practice is especially acute in digitization projects, which are seen as an added responsibility to overwhelming workloads. In response to declining government funding and the rhetoric of More Product Less Process (Greene and Meissner), libraries and archives rely on project-based grants to create term-limited contractual positions. In “Implications of archival labor”, Stacey Williams points to how these grant funded workers are devalued through the lack of security and benefits, and excluded from the work of the permanent staff. Often due to conditions of the grant, these contract archivists are unable to participate in professional endeavors or participate in the decision-making processes of the larger department or organization (Williams). While the knowledge products are expected to be preserved and accessible for a long time, digitization laborers can only expect a few months or years of contractual work. Due to this compression of time, project archival work often results in the intensification of work and feelings of isolation and insecurity (Davis, Mattson, McNally and Reynolds). Moreover, similar to the academic labor market (Huws 77-78), precarity has resulted in increased competition, where one’s labor
is easily replaced. This transitory nature of digitization work adds to the devaluation of the labor performed—only the knowledge product, the digital surrogate, remains visible.

In an effort to reduce further costs and maximize efficiency, libraries and archives are also utilizing underpaid and unpaid student labor for digitization projects. Many grants available to institutions are reserved for student employees, framed in the rhetoric of providing valuable training and experience. In Canada, many heritage organizations rely on the Young Canada Works grants which provides wage subsidies for student summer employment. The program is designed to increase students’ employability and help host organizations “maintain their operations in key functions with a skilled workforce” (Government of Canada). The ubiquity of these grants reveal how student labor is built into the infrastructure of heritage organizations, which rely on the knowledge, technical skills, and cheap labor of students for digitization work. Student practicums and internships, embedded into library and information school’s curricula, also utilize unpaid labor. This free labor is framed as an experiential learning opportunity and a contribution to the goal of more equitable, universal access to knowledge and cultural heritage. While individuals benefit from these opportunities, the reliance on unpaid or underpaid labor reinforces a system, where digitization labor is increasingly deskilled and devalued, despite generating value, prestige, and investment for these organizations (Wildenhaus).

**Hidden outsourced labor and partnerships**

Another consequence of neoliberalism’s infiltration into libraries and archives is the outsourcing of digitization labor under the guise of partnerships. Libraries and archives are encouraged to find cost-effective solutions through public and private partnerships. Public-private partnerships exemplify the ways in which market logic permeates the public sector (Hall 715). This neoliberal strategy can be seen in Canada’s Library and Archives (LAC) approach towards digitization, where partnerships to increase LAC’s digitization capacity are stressed (Library and Archives Canada). One major public-private partnership was the agreement with Ancestry.ca, one of the largest commercial vendors for family genealogy. In this partnership, Ancestry.ca digitizes and indexes genealogical records held by LAC, and in return Ancestry.ca is able to make these records available to its member subscription base (Library and Archives Canada). Similarly, the recent National Heritage Digitization Strategy recognized the commercial popularity of genealogical records, noting that it would most likely attract private partners. In these strategies, the language of outsourcing is avoided, but rather hidden as collaborative partnerships.
In this way, digitization labor is hidden under the cost-effective service provided by an external partner organization.

To reduce costs some outsourcing partnerships reinforce systems of inequalities. Like other forms of knowledge work that are being deskilled, the routinization of digitization labor make it vulnerable to global outsourcing (Mosco and McKercher 36). Not surprisingly, libraries and archives have outsourced digitization labor abroad. For example, Carnegie Mellon’s Million Books Project consisted of a global partnership with India, China, and Egypt, with India and China providing the “manpower” for scanning and indexing. While this global partnership addressed the need for digitized non-English language books, it also took advantage of cheap global labor. In addition to global inequalities, some organizations have found cheap domestic labor through the prison-industrial-complex (Cifor and Lee 14). According to a *Mother Jones* article, the genealogical records of the Mormon church have been digitized and indexed by volunteer prison inmates in Utah (Bauer). The article also pointed to how the Utah government has utilized prison labor to scan the archival documents of the Department of Facilities and Construction Management (Utah Correctional Industries). Prison labor is normalized to the extent that an American Library Association publication presented multiple examples of public libraries utilizing the digitization labor of Oklahoma Correctional Industries as a successful story of overcoming limited resources (Caro 9-10). This example highlights how neoliberal forces have devalued the labor of digitization and the people who perform this labor in the name of efficiently and rapidly expanding access to knowledge.

**Mass digitization factories**

Although the conditions in which these outsourced digitization laborers work in are not visible, two prominent mass digitization partnerships, Google Books Search and the Internet Archive may provide some insight. As market demands for digitized material increased, the need to digitize at scale emerged. Google Books Search offered libraries and archives a technological solution, but their machines still required human operators to turn pages. Reportedly, the Google book scanner machine could digitize at the rate of 1,000 pages per hour, but this output depends on the machine-like work of the human book scanner (Somers). According to Wilson, these yellow-badged workers, predominantly people of color, were excluded from the privileges afforded to standard Google workers, such as the use of cafes, bikes, and shuttles. Moreover, Wilson describes the poor working conditions of low wages, high turnover rate, and a behavioral point system—an image that contradicts the Google Mountain View
It is not surprising that Google as a for-profit company exploits its workers, demanding industrial outputs of digitized knowledge products. However, this form of labor is replicated in the not-for-profit digitization initiatives, highlighting the extent to which neoliberal forces have structured nonprofits as well. The Open Content Alliance’s (OCA) digitization project positioned itself as an alternative to the commercial Google Books project with more transparency and openness (Leetaru). However, the human and technical infrastructure of scanning is similar (Thylstrup 12). The Internet Archive, which administered the project, digitizes its clients’ books at its scanning centers across North America.

Similar to Google’s operation, the Internet Archive relies on the labor of relatively low-waged human scanners. According to an Internet Archive job posting from 2006, at the San Francisco scanning center, part-time book scanners made $11/hour; another source reports an average hourly wage of $17/hour (Murrell 73). The job posting stressed the need for tolerance for repetitive tasks, attention to detail, and a basic knowledge of computers and email. In their dissertation research, Mary Murrell contends that digitization requires the technical skills and judgement of humans to produce quality images, as books “often violate the standards assumed in industrialized workflows” (72). These book scanners are tasked with not only performing rote, mechanical labor, but skilled labor as well; however, they are not acknowledged or valued for their contributions. While the Internet Archive book scanners likely work in better conditions than Google scanners, the work still involves low-paid, repetitive mechanical labor performed at a rapid pace. At one point, the Toronto scanning center consisted of human scanners turning pages in two shifts from 8:30 AM to 11:00 PM (Hutchinson). An article in *The Toronto Star*, described the project as an “industrial assembly line,” questioning the company’s portrait of the operation as medieval monks and scribes (Calami). Arguably, the Internet Archive’s digitization operation resembles the factory, rather than the medieval scriptorium. This image of industrial labor reveals how nonprofit organizations under neoliberalism replicate the exploitative labor of businesses to remain competitive for their client partners.

The Internet Archive’s book scanners, however, value their work and take pride in their contribution to open knowledge. According to Brewster Kahle, founder of the Internet Archive, most scanners are college graduates who “just love books and want to see them live on.” (Kahle and Vadillo 2). The employees themselves have expressed their enjoyment of working with books in various newspaper interviews. One employee who was laid off after three years, claimed “It was the first time I felt I contributed to society” (Casey). Another employee
with an English literature degree described the book scanning job as one of the best they’ve had (Kesmodel and Vara). Despite the repetitive nature of the work, many Internet Archive scanners are passionate about their role in bringing out the organization’s mission of universal access to all knowledge. This passion even surprised Kahle and the scanning centre supervisors; they assumed that no one would be able to tolerate repetitive work for long periods of time (Murrell 73). As this passion makes scanners more productive and efficient, it is codified in the job description: “love of books a plus” (Internet Archive). In positioning digitization work as a labor of love, the Internet Archive is able to mask the factory-like conditions of labor, where employees are expected to perform at a machine-like pace with minimal job security. In fact, the book scanning positions have turned into volunteer or intern positions, promising volunteers a “chance to help bring digital knowledge to others both near and far!” (Internet Archive). The mission to bringing about universal access to knowledge conceals the infrastructure of factory-like conditions of labor.

**Ethical access to knowledge**

The exploitative working conditions surrounding digitization stand in stark contrast with the ideologies of universal access and social justice touted by libraries and archives. As Cifor and Lee argue, the archival field has yet to grapple with how neoliberal structures are reproducing inequalities and devaluing archival labor. However, there are growing critical discussions around digitization labor and initiatives to build ethical labor practices while advancing access to knowledge. One example is the Latin American Digital Initiative (LADI), which advocates for community-oriented partnerships. Alpert-Abrams, Bliss, and Carbajal outline the consciously anti-colonial and anti-neoliberal approach they took in carrying out a digital initiative of the LLILAS Benson Latin American Collection library. LADI utilizes the post-custodial model of archives, in which LLIAS Benson provides digital stewardship of archival material held by partner organizations and archives in Latin America. In this framework, the outsourcing of digitization labor is recognized as a way to direct funds to community partners in Latin America, providing fair compensation, open communication, and training and support. Alpert-Abrams, Bliss, and Carbajal see their efforts as a way of resisting and critically reflecting on neoliberal archival practice. In this way, these partnerships are not centred on cost-reduction, but true collaboration and equal partnership in stewarding access to knowledge.

Another way forward is to draw on the work of digital humanities scholars, practitioners, and students who are discussing labor issues within this emerging field. Digital humanities scholars are recognizing
how students are often tasked with the processing of humanities data, which includes scanning and proofing digitized texts, but rarely are given opportunities to participate in scholarly analysis or project design (Anderson et al.). Although digital humanities labor, and similarly digitization labor, involves design, coordination, policy development, and other skilled labor, students are often relegated to routine tasks, such as scanning and metadata entry. The UCLA Digital Humanities program created a Student Collaborators’ Bill of Rights which defines this type of digitization work as “mechanical labor,” which students should be compensated for (Di Pressi et al.). The Bill of Rights states principles and values involving student labor and collaboration that should guide digital humanities projects. The library and archives field too can explicitly address unpaid student labor through the development of a bill of rights and advocate for paid internships (Wildenhaus).

Conversations around archival labor is growing. For example, recently, the Issues and Advocacy section of the Society of American Archivists launched a survey to gather data about temporary labor (@ courecore). The Digital Library Forum (DLF) has also established a Working Group on Labor in Digital Libraries and has published a research agenda centred on gathering more information about organized labor, different categories of labor, and experiences of laborers within digital libraries. Collectively, these professional associations, working groups, and organizations can advocate for changes in library and archive labor practices. Through critical discussion of how forces of neoliberalism and capital has created a system of precarious underpaid, unpaid, and outsourced labor, libraries and archives can imagine ways of resisting these forces and advocate for the value of the labor of digitization. In this way, libraries and archives can build greater access to knowledge and community heritage, while also building equitable and ethical infrastructure for knowledge work.

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Elkin, A. Hand Job zine. alizaelk.in/digitize/.


Book Review


Reviewed by Babak Zarin

…survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish.

-Audre Lorde, 1979

In Which Side Are You On?: Seven Social Responsibility Debates in American Librarianship, 1990-2015, former American Library Association (ALA) Councilor-at-Large, Social Responsibilities Round Table coordinator, and Progressive Librarian Guild Coordinating Council member Elaine Harger portrays in extensive detail seven social responsibility (or justice) debates that have occurred within the ALA over the past thirty years. Each of the seven debates—a wide-ranging list including debates regarding the ALA’s association with McDonalds and the Boy Scouts of America to react-

Babak Zarin (JD, Elon University School of Law 2014; MSLIS, Catholic University of America 2019) is a newly minted librarian and member of the 2018-2019 ALA Spectrum Scholar cohort. His research interests include looking at the evolving state of intellectual property and how library practices can continue adapting their services to the needs of today’s information-heavy, pluralistic society, as well as fandom studies. Babak currently works as the Access Services Librarian for the Central Rappahannock Regional Library in Fredericksburg, VA, where he works to ensure that members of the library community with impairments or disabilities are able to have equal access to the library’s resources.”

Keywords: book review; social responsibility; librarianship; debates; American Library Association; ALA; Social Responsibility Round Table; SRRT; The Speaker (film); intellectual freedom; anti-apartheid movement; McDonalds (fast food) and librarianship; Boy Scouts of America; Edward Snowden; climate crisis

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tion towards the anti-apartheid “book boycott” movement—is given its own chapter, with Harger moving chronologically from what gave rise to the debate through to its aftermath. The book concludes with a discussion on environmentalism and with Harger’s own draft resolution calling for the ALA to take actions towards an immediate reduction in CO2 emissions. In doing so, *Which Side Are You On* raises questions regarding the roles librarians play in society; how the need for intellectual freedom in libraries interacts (and often counteracts) the need to be socially responsive to the communities that librarians serve; and, in the end, how the librarians of today’s society will act when faced with such conflicts.

Harger’s book is very timely. The past several years has seen many of the questions and issues raised in *Which Side Are You On* become more prominent within both the professional fields of librarian, archival, and museum sciences, as well as within the public while the political climate in the United States of America has grown more polarized. These seven case studies then provide a strong basis and entryway for newer librarians in the field who have yet to encounter this history but increasingly must address discussions framed by them. It is not a large leap, for example, from the discussion in Chapter 1 regarding the ALA’s role in creating, airing, and reviving the infamous 1977 film *The Speaker*, to the current ongoing debate regarding the American Library Association’s meeting room policy. To have them discussed in the level of thoughtful detail that Harger, as a witness or participant in all seven debates (pg.3), only makes the reading more engaging and thought-provoking as the personal impact of these debates becomes all the more apparent from someone who was there to live them.

This is not the only way *Which Side Are You On* is an invaluable text. Harger also provides a rare glimpse into how the ALA itself operates, detailing at length both the social history surroundings movements within the ALA and the maneuvering of its varied committee and council members. This record may be of great help for lower-ranking members whose only interactions with the ALA are through its listservs and who are seeking to gain a greater understanding of the procedures the ALA follows in bringing and voting on measures. Perhaps the best example of this is Chapter 5’s discussion of the almost-passed Resolution in Support of Whistleblower Edward Snowden, a lengthy account that features not only the text as proposed and revised, but excerpts of the transcript of the debate along with the voting records of each participant. While it may seem slow going, the methodical description certainly helps to highlight who says what, and what may be influencing the figures in the discussion.

This is not to say that *Which Side Are You On* is flawless. Newer librarians may wonder how a book that manages to include and raise
discussions on issues regarding race, sexuality, religion, political power, corporate power, privacy, and environmentalism somehow doesn’t have similar case studies that prominently discuss issues of gender, immigration, and technology, as these last three issues are among those that today make headline news on a regular basis. Librarians with less familiarity with these social issues in a broader context may also question the framework around some of the discussions. For example, Chapter 3’s discussions of the ALA’s response to the censorship of news reports by the Israeli government likely requires a far deeper understanding of the intricacies of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the United States’ role in it, in order to fully appreciate the distinctions Harger draws. Yet neither of these are particularly off-setting weaknesses: the absence of discussions regarding the immigrant crisis and the #MeToo movement is understandable as the book came out in 2016, and Harger does an admirable job in orienting readers to the more complex social issues through recounting her own experiences and citing to additional reference works. More importantly, that these are perhaps the only notable weaknesses to the book speaks strongly to how much work Harger has spent in creating an account a layperson can engage with, as well as how well a follow-up work would be received.

Which Side Are You On then is a strong text, encompassing major debates and stances that librarians have engaged with from the past thirty years. The information is invaluable and approachable, and the book clearly meets Harger’s stated goal in using the debates to illustrate “the manner in which hegemonies of power are challenged, reproduced, reinforced, and altered within a professional association; and make a small contribution to the historic record of the American Library Association” (pg. 3). Well-written, Which Side Are You On should be recommended to all those seeking to understand better the current social responsibility debates within the profession, how they may better engage with these matters, and what kinds of responses they might face.
Connecting for International Librarianship
A conversation with Shiraz Durrani

Questions from Julian Jaravata

July 12, 2018

Given the focus of the course on international librarianship, I was wondering in what ways you see progressive librarianship as a distinct field from international librarianship, but also the different ways in which they relate. I know you discuss the role of progressive librarianship in the context of globalization, but I wanted to ask if you see internationalism as intrinsic to progressive librarianship.

An important issue raised by your question is perhaps conceptual: progressive librarianship is seen in contrast to international librarianship. Is this appropriate? The real contradiction is between national and international progressive librarianship (socialist-orientated), and national and international conservative librarianship (capitalist-orientated). This opens up the possibility of national AND international librarianship being progressive and socialist-orientated — whereas the current situation is both, national and international librarianship are conservative and capitalist-orientated. This needs to be at the centre of any studies on international librarianship.

Shiraz Durrani is a British-Kenyan library science professional noted for his writings on the social and political dimensions of information and librarianship in Kenya and UK. His recent publications focus on the history of resistance to colonialism and imperialism in Kenya.

Julian Jaravata is an MLIS student at San Jose State University based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition, he organizes with the Filipino American community and most recently has been involved with the Malaya Movement to oppose the current Philippine president Duterte’s fascism and fight for genuine democracy in the Philippines.

Keywords: anti-imperialism; international librarianship; progressive librarianship; anti-capitalism; resistance movements
Let us understand the real meaning and purpose of “progressive librarianship” (PL). PL has arisen in response to the traditional librarianship (TL) model developed under capitalism and propagated internationally by imperialism. TL has been promoted as the only possible model of librarianship and so goes without the defining term “conservative” before the name, thus becoming the universal term “librarianship”. In this context, even the term “conservative” is inadequate and should be replaced by “capitalist” librarianship (CL) as opposed to socialist librarianship.

In view of the embargo on the concept and ideals of socialism placed by capitalism and imperialism, it has been difficult for those seeking an alternative to CL to call the alternative Socialist Librarianship as that would make it difficult to put it into practice because of the power of finance capital. I recall that when I first started working in UK at Hackney Public Libraries in 1987, the term socialist library was used quite often, until the attacks on any alternative to capitalism under Maggie Thatcher’s Conservative government made it difficult to use even the term, socialism. That began the TINA era—There is No Alternative to capitalism—and full-scale attacks began on any progressive developments in libraries—or in any other field.

Now, if we accept that the PL movement in general aspires to socialist ideals of justice and equality for working classes and those oppressed by capitalism, then it follows that issues of classes, class conflicts and class struggles are central concerns for PL. Without this, it remains a meaningless jargon used to create a false sense of “alternatives” to CL. So it is important to understand that PL without class analysis is a meaningless term.

In that scenario, International Librarianship (IL) gains new significance. It is not a question of whether PL is “a distinct field from international librarianship”. PL sees the struggle of working classes against capitalism and imperialism in its national as well as in its internationalist contexts. Capitalism is not confined to one country. Imperialism, by its very nature, is also not confined to one country. They have global approach and global reach. For PL to be effective in one country, it has, of necessity, to link up with PL movements in other countries and globally if it is to be an effective social force. This implies that PL has to link up and work in solidarity with the struggles of working classes in its own, as well as, in other countries.

The situation that PL faces is the oppression of working classes by capitalism and imperialism. It cannot resolve this by ignoring its real enemies. For this it needs to work with its class allies internally and internationally.

This understanding of PL and its social and international context may be problematic for some PL organisations in that they are in
countries which officially follow capitalism and are against socialism. But PL work, of necessity, involves engaging in class struggles in their society. The issue is how to challenge capitalism/imperialism in the library and information world. Some may do it openly, others stealthily, but the fundamental contradiction that PL addresses are the same.

The progressive librarianship movements in USA and Europe, as well as in some countries of Africa have developed links with each other and a recent publication by Al Kagan records their history and aims. Such activities have strengthened these organisations individually as well as the PL movement internationally.

The elephant in the room for international librarianship, as for national librarianship, is capitalism and imperialism. Once this is fully recognised, there will be clarity on where librarianship needs to go. Progressive librarianship can then be seen as a step towards non-capitalist or socialist library service from the present capitalist/conservative setup. That is the key struggle in librarianship today, for both, national and international librarianship. The power relations between capitalist/conservative librarianship and progressive/socialist librarianship can then be seen more clearly—both nationally and internationally.

Along those lines, what have been your experiences working with and across different borders, both regionally within Africa as well as throughout the globe, with progressive librarian networks?

The situation of Britain is that of a country brought development and growth by plundering the resources of the entire world under the so-called British Empire. This was a glorified term for global looting, massacres and plunder. The loot enabled the rich and powerful to amass massive wealth, and the crumbs from their table ensured that the revolutionary flames of working class were not allowed to engulf the entire country. But the situation began to change gradually with the decline of the Empire under resistance from the conquered countries. As countries achieved independence, the power of the empire to syphon off wealth of workers and peasants declined. This is when neo-colonialism replaced colonialism, but for Britain the change was more traumatic as the new imperialist power, USA, muscular in with its share of the loot. This further weakened British capitalism and reduced its ability to suppress militancy among working classes.


The PL movement in Britain when I started working in 1987 reflected the state of the country—conservative. That there was very conservative professional body, the British Library Association \(^2\) which later changed its name to CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) \(^3\). It was part of the national establishment and saw no need to challenge the status quo, politically or in the context of libraries and the needs of librarians. There were no specific trade unions for library workers who joined national trade unions. While they protected the interests of librarians as workers, there was no organisation that took on the broader role of questioning the general direction of libraries, public or academic.

My experiences in UK and Kenya are recorded in my books, *Progressive Librarianship* \(^4\) and *Information & Liberation* \(^5\). In general, it was a struggle where progressive librarianship won some battles and created liberated territories which flourished while there was political, trade union and community power behind the initiatives (as in the Three Continents Liberation Collection in Hackney \(^6\)) or the progressive staffing structure and the the Innovations Project in Merton. But as power shifted in national and local authorities from progressive Labour administration to the Conservative party, such initiatives were rendered powerless and closed down.

Perhaps a better approach was in changing the teaching curricula at the London Metropolitan University where a progressive approach was adopted. This addressed the key issue of training progressive staff from the early stages of their professional career. Another initiative was the Quality Leaders Project -Youth which developed management skills of library staff while developing progressive services too. Yet even here, the policies of the Conservative Government ensured that such initiatives were also suppressed as they posed real challenges to the capitalist model.

All this indicated the need for librarians to be active in the political as well as professional fields if they are to be successful.

**Kenya** lost an opportunity to build a people-oriented library service at independence.\(^7\) With the “aid” of the departing colonial

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2 In reflection of the imperial history of the country, the LA did not feel the need to use the term “British” before its name.

3 The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.


6 Details about this and other projects mentioned are available in the two books quoted earlier.

7 Durrani, Shiraz (1998): Independence in Kenya and the lost opportunity to
power, it strengthened the conservative model of libraries, both public and academic. Several attempts to introduce progressive library and information activities are recorded in my two books mentioned earlier. It was only in 2017 that a total departure took place when the Progressive African Library and Information Activists’ Group (PALIAAct) set up the Ukombozi Library in Nairobi. The Ukombozi Library has a sizeable collection of progressive books and is establishing strong links through its ReachOut Project to link up with local working class communities and students.

Here again, there is no official government support and the public library service continues its “traditional” approach, unconnected with any progressive movement.

PALIAAct has attracted support in other countries, notably in Ghana and Zimbabwe.

Given the particular way that PALIAAct asserts itself as an activist organization that emphasizes serving workers and peasants, what are lessons from your experiences that might be able to be offered to other countries with class relations that may bear some similarities? (For me, the discussion around how progressive librarians should prioritize workers and peasants reminds me of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial condition of the Philippines).

The key point to note is that government policies do not take into account the information needs of workers and peasants. This follows from the assumption on the part of planners, decision-makers and power-holders that there are no classes in their societies and that there are no specific needs that relate to specific classes. This assumption is based on the class interests of those in power and even if they are aware of different needs in different classes, they ignore the needs of workers and peasants for ideological reasons in their own class interest. Combined with that is the fact that capitalism and imperialism have taken power from workers and peasants and empowered the comprador class who are then programmed to meet the needs of capital, local and international.

In view of this, the question of power and power relations in these societies becomes crucial. This applies in the wider social areas of economy, politics and cultural life as well as in specific sectors like libraries and information. This explains the reality of the situation for workers and peasants: they do not have power to formulate or implement policies; they do not have the power to change the direction of national policies from the market-orientated approach towards a socialist approach with equality and justice as key requirements; they do not control national resources to formulate policies; they do not have build a people orientated library service. *Library Review* 47(8).
the infrastructure to implement policies that are in their interest; they do not control educational institutions that train library and information workers whose skills are in the service of maintaining the status quo.

Given this situation, progressive organisations like PALIAct need to be clear about their role in meeting the needs of workers and peasants. First, they need to understand that the traditional libraries, their organisations and government policies will not change themselves to a people-orientated service. While the long-term goal is to move these national institutions to change their policies, in the short term some action can be taken. Some aspects of such action are:

1. People: For progressive social change to happen it needs progressive people: librarians, community workers, workers and peasants and their organisations, development workers, artists, progressive students and academics, among others. They will be the engine that brings about change.

2. Leadership: This will emerge from among the group of people mentioned above. They would not be afraid to learn from history and experiences from other countries.

3. Vision: develop a vision that can guide the new movement towards a people-oriented service with justice and equality in command.

4. Organisation: set up a progressive library organisation that can formulate alternative policies to provide relevant library and information services and also seek ways of influencing government policies. The organisation needs to bring together all progressive individuals and institutions that can work together.

An important requirement in achieving the above is resources. As there is no official backing for the initiative, there will not be funds to set up the organisation. In this situation, there is need for self-reliance and those committed to change need to provide whatever resources they can and contribute in terms of their time and skills. This means that they need to be employed elsewhere for survival but to put in time and efforts in the new initiative as their contribution for change. Thus the initiative is not for people who seek gain such as employment or favours or services in return for work. The key requirement for the new organisation is commitment to equality and justice and enthusiasm to achieve meaningful change. While funds can be sought at a later stage when the organisation is strong, such external funds need to be rejected if they come with strings that subvert the vision of the organisation. There is boundless energy and commitment among workers and peasants and they will support this move if the aims and visions are clearly explained to them. It may be necessary for all those involved in the new initiative to attend study classes where they would
learn about classes and class struggles, their own history, the politics of information etc. so as to ensure they are committed to the new approach. Capitalism and imperialism have kept us ignorant about alternative information, ideas, and experiences, and the start of any movement for change needs to fill these gaps.

It is well to keep in mind that in the case of Mau Mau in Kenya, they did not wait for money from donor agencies to help them set up the resistance that ended colonialism. They used their own labour and resources, ideas and imagination to face a challenging enemy. That is the approach needed in the information world today.

After reading the article you co-authored Elizabeth Smallwood in the Progressive Librarian, I wonder what are the challenges that you’ve faced in international librarianship settings in combatting the idea of “neutrality” as a quality that the profession as a whole should strive towards?

The question of neutrality hides the larger political issues that are the background to the debate. Those who promote neutrality are in effect stating that they favour the status quo in a capitalist society. Being neutral means pretending not to take sides, which, in effect, means, supporting the power relations as they are. If the desire is to change the system so that those marginalised become the masters of their own destiny, then one cannot sit on the neutrality fence. One has to be on the side of those struggling to get their share of power and resources. In essence, key question are about class struggle and on whose side one stands.

The challenges we face are hidden and below-the-surface and so more difficult to identify and challenge. Nobody comes and says they are neutral or explains what neutrality means. They “show” themselves in the actions and results they achieve through their policies and practices. Here are some examples of how “neutrality” hits working people: when funds are taken away from services needed by working classes and given to the rich elite; when libraries are cut while the military keeps getting more funds; when hospitals, education and other services that benefit working people the most are reduced to fund taxes cuts for the rich; when library funds are used for travel and luxury books but not for books that support people’s learning, awareness of their rights, and exposure to experiences of resistance and change; when professional library staff are replaced by volunteers. All these policy decisions are made by politicians claiming to be neutral in allocating national resources.

So how does one challenge such “neutrality”? That is the key challenge in national as well as international context. It is necessary to challenge not only local library associations, but international ones such
as IFLA to ensure that such “neutrality” is exposed at all levels. At the same time, politicians who claim to represent their constituents need to be effectively challenged, as do the corporations which squeeze out surplus from the labour of working people. In short, a social revolution is the only answer.

The resolution of the neutrality issue is in the title of another of our articles: “The Professional is political: redefining the social role of public libraries.” Librarians can bring about change in libraries by becoming active in the political sphere. They also need to redefine the social role of libraries under capitalism. But again, this cannot be achieved fully unless there is an internationalist approach. Working with other progressive people in many countries is more likely to change the mind-sets among policy makers than just working on the level of individual countries.

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On June 27, 2018 the public sector union landscape shifted with the Supreme Court Janus vs. AFSCME ruling that dramatically undermined unions for librarians, teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other public employees throughout the United States (Matthews, 2018).

In 2017-2018 unions responded to the 2016 election as a push-back against their daily work. Coming into 2017 unions were faced with the realization that their hollowing out had impacted election choices because of the powerful role unions play in politically mobilizing and educating their members by articulating and transmitting social democratic values and class solidarity. Because unions were delivering less at the bargaining table members were less willing to accept political

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**Elaine Harger** is a member of Seattle Education Association-NEA, librarian at Washington Middle School where she is active in the Racial Equity Team, and she also teaches the yearbook class and helps care for the school learning garden.

Keywords: collective bargaining; labor unions; strikes; lockouts; activism in librarianship; pickets
direction (Draper, 2017).

The main event in 2018 for library workers, many of whom are in the public sector, was the Supreme Court Janus decision, which ended the longstanding practice of unions’ right to collect dues from all bargaining unit members regardless of an individual’s decision to join or not join the union.


While unions sought to mitigate the impact of Janus, anti-union groups such as the National Right to Work Foundation created the website, MyJanusRights.org, to assist union members in leaving unions. AFSCME describes the Janus case as eroding the freedom “to form unions to improve our lives and the communities we serve (AFSCME, n.d., para. 3).”

Manzo and Bruno (2018) of the Illinois Economic Policy Institute have forecasted the effects of the Janus decision against fair share fees—specifically on state and local government workers, including teachers. They assess the likely impacts of Janus on public sector union membership, and on the wage and salary incomes of state and local government employees, including teachers.

A fiery example for librarians is stance of the Brooklyn Library Guild which addressed Janus noting, “Our strength is in our numbers, and it will be through collective action that we can fight inequality and attacks on workers” Brooklyn Library Guild, 2018, para. 15). Schuhkre writing of post-Janus labor coalition building at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) has observed there will be “more solidarity, more organizing, more direct action, more strikes, and a deeper determination to fight for our rights as public sector workers “ (2018, para. 15). Unions at UIC are “Sticking to the Union” as are many more advocates for working people post-Janus (Quinnell, 2018).

Oh, you can’t scare me, I’m sticking to the union,
I’m sticking to the union, I’m sticking to the union.
Oh, you can’t scare me, I’m sticking to the union,
I’m sticking to the union ‘til the day I die.

--Woody Guthrie

The 2018 Department of Professional Employees- AFL-CIO publication “Library Workers Facts & Figures” notes:
• 26.2 percent of librarians are union members.
• 19.3 percent of library technicians are union members.
• 22.7 percent of library assistants are union members.

The “Union Difference” was 31% higher salaries for librarians in unions (DPE-AFL-CIO, 2018, para. 14).

Below are 2017-2018 library union highlights from the blog Union Library Workers.
Prelude

January 2017
National Right to Work Foundation backs School librarian telling courts she no longer wants to be forced to pay union fees
A school librarian tells courts she no longer wants to be forced to pay union fees from the salary she earns as a librarian at the Robeson Elementary Center in Birdsboro backed by the National Right to Work Foundation.

   Rick Bloomingdale, president of the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, said the teachers want “the good contracts, the good pensions, the health care, but they don’t want to pay for it. They think these things are going to miraculously happen without someone at the bargaining table pushing for them.”

   The Pennsylvania State Education Association, a defendant, said: “This is another attempt to rewrite the law and use it as a political attack on unions and the people they represent.” The union in the Twin Valley Education Association, has 245 members and two nonmember fee payers (Von Bergen, 2017).

February 2017
Library board approves long-term labor contract
The Decatur (IL) Public Library board approved a rare long-term contract Thursday with union members intended to provide stability for both sides. The nearly 10-year contains a 1.5 percent per year pay increase for the over 20 union members (Lusvardi). Board resident, John Phillips, thanked City Librarian Rick Meyer and Randy Hellman, a staff representative for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) for their leadership in the negotiation process. [ed.note: April 12, 2018 Mr. Meyer reported that there had been minor changes in the contract draft but nothing of substance. Mr. Meyer said that overall it was a very positive session. Motion by Mr. Phillips to approve the AFSCME/Library contract, seconded by Mr. Sexton, unanimously approved] (Lusvardi, 2017).

March 2017
Berkeley Librarian Whistleblower Day
Over the past 18 months, staffers at Berkeley Library have described atmosphere of discomfort and distrust. The library administration, they said, has questioned the actions of some of the staff, particularly those
who have been vocal about recent library policies. Seven staff members have been subjected to an amorphous investigation on “potential misconduct” that has gone on so long the ACLU has lodged a formal complaint. Some staff members were told they were “insubordinate,” may have “violated” library policies and could be fired, according to half a dozen employees who asked not to be identified because they fear for their jobs. The result is an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in many departments, particularly at the Central Branch. The employee union, SEIU Local 1021, has filed numerous grievances, many against one manager. One employee was fired and then rehired after he threatened to file a wrongful termination suit. A number of employees have left as a result of the work atmosphere, according to multiple interviews with library staff. Even the Berkeley City Council has recognized the challenges faced by some library staffers. On Feb. 28, 2017 Mayor Jesse Arreguín issued a proclamation declaring that day Berkeley Librarian Whistleblower Day. (City of Berkeley, 2017).

East Side Freedom Library is winner of 2017 John Sessions Memorial Award. St. Paul

The East Side Freedom Library has been selected as the 2017 winner of the John Sessions Memorial Award. The award, sponsored by the American Library Association, Reference and Adult Users Association and the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO, recognizes a library or library system which has made a significant effort to work with the labor community and by doing so has brought recognition to the history and contributions of the labor movement to the development of the United States.

The mission of the East Side Freedom Library is “to inspire solidarity, advocate for justice, and work toward equity for all” (ALA, 2017, para. 2). As an independent library located in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood of St. Paul, Minn., the ESFL has successfully built relationships with organized labor and community groups that facilitate the empowerment, learning, and engagement of working people.

Since the library was established in 2013, co-founders Peter Rachleff and Beth Cleary have secured a permanent home in a former Carnegie Library, built a collection of 15,000 items, and hosted more than one hundred programs and 6,000 visitors (ALA, 2017).

The East Side Freedom Library was honored with a plaque
at the RUSA Achievement Awards ceremony at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

_Historic AFSCME Library Photos & Audio_

“Librarian Carol Fortman checks in resources for blind library patrons such as audio recordings and braille books. She was a member of AFSCME Local 426, Milwaukee Public Library & Museum Employees.” Old photos and a radio interview from the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs of AFSCME-represented librarians (AFSCME, n.d.).

_April 2017_

_Sandwich Public Library Reopens on Sundays Following Long Unionization Process_

Following a unionization effort begun in 2010, Sunday openings have finally returned to the Sandwich [MA] Public Library—the last remaining sticking point in contract negotiations for the Sandwich Public Library Staff Association, a member of Local 4928 Massachusetts Library Staff Association, American Federation of Teachers. (The Sandwich Enterprise, 2017).

_Homewood library staff members join union: First library to organize in south Chicago suburbs_

In February 2016, employees reached out to the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 31. All but two of the nearly 60 non-management employees signed on to unionize. Certified by the Illinois Labor Relations Board last August, the group then went on to form a four-person bargaining committee choosing Lisa Stilts, paraprofessional in Library Services, as president. Other committee members include Sandra Sullivan and Caitlyn Archer-Helke, both librarians, and Sue Ryan, circulation clerk (Bruni, 2017).

_Library Union Prepares to Fight Staffless Pilot Project_

The Toronto Public Library Workers Union, Local 4948, opposes plans by management at Toronto Public Library to extend library hours by replacing library staff with security cameras (Yelland, 2017).
Rally for fair contract at Middlesex County College
Members of the Middlesex County College (NJ) local of the American Federation of Teachers, which includes faculty and library workers, rallied with students on April 24, 2017 to demand a fair contract. MCC faculty and staff rallied for a fair contract (Loyer, 2017).

In long Camden County library contract dispute, hint of a breakthrough
Camden County (NJ) librarians and librarian assistants are seeking a new contract and higher wages. Librarians’ assistants in the county, who are represented by Communications Workers of America Local 1014, earn the lowest starting salaries in the state. Librarians are the lowest paid in the state. The librarians, almost all of whom are women, are represented by AFSCME Local 1454. (Albert, 2017).

Libraries impacted by pending strike in Sunnyvale CA
Members of the Sunnyvale Employees Association, which includes public library workers, who have not received a raise in five years, prepare to strike on May 1st. The Sunnyvale Public Library posted an announcement on its website informing library users that hours will be curtailed. City managers have filed an injunction against the union. (Bay City News).

May 2017

Sometimes you have to eat a bad contract. Live to fight another day. Emily Drabinski’s provided a raw, honest explanation of the LIU-Brooklyn contract process and why she is voting Yes. We have been given management’s last best final offer. The same day they sent us the last best final offer, they filed the necessary documents to lockout or impose that final offer. Whether we vote to ratify or not, all signs point to the terms of this contract being the terms we work under, either for the next five years or indefinitely. I find myself Sometimes you have to eat a bad contract. Live to fight another day. LIU, something that used to be a turn of phrase but now is a very real, very material thing. It is dark and tight in here, and it hurts (Drabinski, 2017a, 2017b).

Student Library Employee Union Joins Teamsters-University of Chicago

University of Chicago student library employees have voted to unionize, with over 80 percent of voters supporting affiliation with Teamsters Local 743. These workers, 226 in total, will be known as the Student Library Employee Union (SLEU), and affiliated with Teamsters Local 743 (eNews Park Forest 2017). “We welcome these student workers into the Teamsters family at Local 743,” said Deborah Simmons-Peterson, President of Local 743. “We’ve been representing the professional library staff at the university since 1980 and that experience will enhance our representation of the student workers” (Teamsters Local 743, 2017, para. 3).

William P. Faust Library (Westland, MI) protest staff terminations

About 30 people turned out at a William P. Faust Library Board meeting Wednesday in Westland to protest the termination of five librarians in March. The unionization effort — not the first in the library’s history — came in the wake of a reorganization that resulted in the lay-off of five librarians. Those librarians identified themselves as the organizing leaders and filed an Unfair Labor Practice alleging the lay-offs were related to union activity. It was a repeat of earlier meeting protests as library staff has voted to unionize and an initial meeting between the sides is expected in June (Rogers, 2017).
June 2017

Faculty at Cesar Chavez Prep Middle School (CHARTER SCHOOL) vote to join AFT (DC)

Middle school teachers (including librarians) at a charter school in Columbia Heights (District of Columbia) have voted to unionize, forming the first collective bargaining unit at a charter school in the district. The teachers at Cesar Chavez Prep Middle School voted 31-2 in favor of joining the American Federation of Teachers (McGee, 2017).

DPE Participates in American Library Association Annual Conference.

The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) traveled to Chicago, Illinois, to participate in the American Library Association’s (ALA) annual conference, adding a union voice to the gathering of nearly 20,000 library professionals. DPE Legislative and Outreach Director Michael Wasser co-chairs the AFL-CIO/ALA Labor Committee, which is comprised of union members and members of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) division of ALA. The Labor Committee works to initiate, develop, and foster a closer working relationship between the librarian and labor communities.

The Labor Committee also again sponsored a program, which drew a standing room only crowd of over 50 conference attendees. This year’s program, “The New Normal: Libraries Navigate Uncertain Times,” explored how libraries rebuilt programs, services, hours, and staffing levels, and are creating new models to challenge austerity. Panelists included Kay Schwartz, director of the Flint (Mich.) Public Library and Emily Drabinski and Tamara Townsend, librarians at Long Island University, Brooklyn, and members of the Long Island University Faculty Federation (Wasser, 2017).

July 2017

Nyack library workers vote to unionize.

Nyack Library workers voted July 24 to form a union affiliated with the New York State United Teachers. The 33-7 vote came the week after management had refused to recognize the Nyack Library Staff Association, organized in June, by card check (Redmond, 2018).

August 2017

Dayton Public Schools (Ohio) Prepare for Strike and Settlement.

Dayton Public Schools will be open for the Aug. 15 start of
school, regardless of whether teachers (and librarians) are on strike, Superintendent Rhonda Corr said. DPS is working with a company called Alternative Workforce, Inc., a subsidiary of the strike-staffing company Huffmaster, which has provided teachers to other school districts that have had strikes (Kelley, 2017a, 2017b).

**Niles Township High School (IL) Union Contract Ushers In New Era**

The Niles Township High School (IL) Dist. 219 Board of Education on Aug. 15 approved a new contract or the Niles Township Federation of Teachers and Support Staff, who earlier the same day voted to accept the July 1, 2017-effective agreement.

Under the new agreement, 37 staff support positions currently performed by outsourced contract workers will become direct district employee positions. The contract also covers 369.5 full-time teachers and 205 support staff. Maintenance, clerical and librarian jobs that were contracted would become district union employee positions. (North Suburban Teachers Union, n.d.).

**Union Leader-Librarian Prevails in suit against Retirement System**

Former National Education Association Shawnee Mission president, Nancy Fritz, has prevailed in her effort to get the Kansas Public Employee Retirement System (KPERS) to give her service credit for the time she spent leading the teachers union. Nancy Fritz, a librarian who had worked for the district for 27 years when she took the NEA president position, filed suit against KPERS last fall after the retirement system informed her that it would not be counting the five years she spent as head of the union toward her retirement account. During that time, KPERS claimed, Fritz was no longer an employee of the district, but of the union (Senter, 2017).

**Nyack librarians beat back anti-union law firm**

Library workers in Nyack have voted to organize and affiliate with NYSUT.

“The challenges that confront labor are many,” said NYSUT President Andy Pallotta. “We will never stop fighting to improve the lives of working people, and despite being under attack, we continue to succeed as a result of our determination and commitment to what’s right.”

Nyack library workers fought off a vicious anti-labor campaign
waged by the Nyack Library Board of Directors, which hired Jackson Lewis, the notorious union-busting law firm, to try and defeat the organizing effort.

Using deception and fear, Jackson Lewis besieged library workers with anti-union missives “warning” of the “risks” of unionizing.

With support from concerned community members, staff was able to beat back the firm’s relentless attack. Pivotal to the librarians’ victory was a midsummer board meeting in which library workers and residents appeared in force to demand Jackson Lewis’ firing.

“My co-workers and I have decided to form a union, which is our right,” said Myra Starr, a longtime South Nyack resident and a bookkeeper at the library. “It’s just appalling, especially in a place like Nyack, that my employer thinks it’s acceptable to use my own tax money to fight us.”

On July 24, workers voted overwhelmingly to unionize, and in August, the unit received certification from the National Labor Relations Board. The Nyack Staff Library Association will have some 50 members. Since the vote to unionize, neither the library nor Jackson Lewis has taken any action to challenge the outcome.

The union will now elect a bargaining team and prepare for its first negotiations (Smith, 2017).

September 2017

San Diego County Workers Approve New Contract

A strike was avoided when a tentative agreement was reached between Service Employees International Union Local 221 and county officials. Union members, including librarians, voted to approve the contract (Stewart, 2017)

Ontario College Faculty Issue Strike Vote

Contract expires September 30 and so, after ten weeks of negotiations with no movement from management, 68% of union members vote to strike if a settlement isn’t reached. Twelve-thousand college faculty
members, including librarians, are represented by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (Matys, 2017)

U.S. Supreme Court to Again Take Up a Case on Public-Employee Union Fees

The Supreme Court has decided to hear a case that challenges the longstanding practice of unions to collect dues from all bargaining unit members regardless of an individual’s decision to join or not join the union. The justices granted review in Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 31 (Case No. 16–1466), which could have a major effect on the teachers’ unions as well as other public-employee unions. The appeal was brought by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation and the Liberty Justice Center on behalf of Mark Janus, an employee of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (Walsh, 2017).

October 2017

Advocating for Better Salaries Toolkit-Updated. 6th Edition


The Toolkit was originally developed by ALA’s 2002–2003 President Maurice J. (Mitch) Freedman’s Better Salaries and Pay Equity for Library Workers Task Force as part of the Campaign for America’s Libraries.

The toolkit is designed to provide library workers with the resources and strategies they need to improve their salaries. The toolkit is divided into four parts: Building Your Case for Better Salaries; Pay Equity; Unions; and Speaking Out. This material is helpful for librarians, administrators, and support staff (Bartholomey, Dorening, Eisenstein & Farrell, 2017).

CBA Collections in the United States.
Geraci, A., & DelRosso, J. (2017). To collect and preserve: The state of state-level CBA collections in the United States. Labor Studies Journal, 42(3), 165–179. Article based on a survey of collections of collective bargaining agreements held in libraries and archives around the country. Of concern to the authors was the scope of collections in various employment sectors, depth of collections in comparison to the history of collective bargaining in the state, and perceptions of those responsible for collections regarding legal mandates governing such collections. Authors cover policy implications of the student and “areas for further study, action, and advocacy.” https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/articles/1155/

Social Activism Collections

Brief descriptions of digitally available documentation of social movements in the U.S. Includes collections covering general history, civil rights, labor, LGBTQ, and women.

December 2017
An Organizer’s Tale: LIU Brooklyn’s Lockout and Union Contract Negotiation

Here’s what I learned from this experience, our one big success, we are the only unit on campus with a negotiated contract. Our big failure, the livelihood of much of our casual labor force has been devastated. Management is highly organized. They were single-minded in their efforts to control us. They have more money than us and more power than us, but we outnumber them. In order to push against forces that have more power than us, we have to organize each other. We have to all be together, working consistently in a forward direction over time. We were not organized enough to force management to offer us a contract without concessions. We cannot let that happen again. When we look at the world as it is right now, there is so much we cannot let happen ever again. We all have so much to stand against, to fight for, to resist, and to organize to change for good. (Drabinski, Emily. 2017 “An Organizer’s Tale: LIU Brooklyn’s Lockout and Union Contract Negotiation,” The Political Librarian.)
February 2018

In a Historic First, the Chicago Teachers Union and Charter School Teachers Have Joined Forces

Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) announced that its members had voted in favor of amalgamating with the Chicago Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff (ChiACTS), which, since 2009, has organized about 1,000 educators at over 30 charter school campuses. (Schuhkre, February 1, 2018). While cooperation between unionized educators at charters and district schools in the United States is common, this is the first known case in which teachers from both types of schools have merged into a single union local. (Schuhrke, 2018).

Grosse Pointe Librarians Ratify New Contract

After hammering out a few details after the library board meeting on February 5, 2018 the board and Grosse Pointe’s librarians and support staff ratified a new contract. Library union president John Clexton says more negotiations are in store. “The contract is good until December 31, 2018. Although short, we hope to begin soon to work on working on negotiations for when that expires,” he said. (Golden, 2018)

March 2018

The Iowa Labor Collection and Iowa Labor History Oral Project, State Historical Society is the 2018 winner of the John Sessions Memorial Award.

The John Sessions Memorial Award, sponsored by the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO, in conjunction with RUSA-ALA was given this year to the Iowa Labor Collection. The collection, consisting of over 1,200 oral history interviews and 1,500 linear feet of documents, images and artifacts is housed at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Iowa City. The oral history collection began in 1974, and according to the Sessions Award press release, “The Iowa Labor Collection is widely regarded as one of the most comprehensive labor history collections in the world, and ILHOP is one of the only large-scale oral history projects initiated and funded by labor unions themselves.

April 2018

Labor in Academic Libraries. Call for Papers. Library Trends

The topic of labor in academic libraries has emerged as an area of critical interest in both academic library and archives communities. Library workers have long been at the center of labor struggles
in higher education. Additionally, librarians and archivists have worked against the relative invisibility of their work within an academy that centers the concerns of disciplinary faculty who often see knowledge workers as adjunct to the scholarly enterprise. We believe the time is right for a collection of essays that can frame the work of librarians, archivists, and library workers within the broader workplace issues of the university. To this end, *Library Trends* issued a call for papers on July 1, 2018 with initial drafts due October 15, 2018.

**How The West Virginia Teacher Strike Was Won**
Talk by a West Virginia teacher who was one of several speakers at the Red & Black Party sponsored by the Labor Sector of Black Rose/Rosa Negra and which was held on April 7th at the 2018 Labor Notes Conference in Chicago (Black Rose Anarchist Federation, 2018).

**June 2018**

*Janus V. American Federation of State, County, And Municipal Employees*
In this 5–4 ruling the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Mark Janus a public employee. In this landmark case, The Supreme court on June 27, 2018 ruled that unions no longer have the right to collect dues from non-member employees. The majority decision was based in the argument that payment of union dues by people not wishing to be union members is a violation of their free speech.

**July 2018**

The decision in the Janus v. AFSCME case effectively makes all states right to work states. The ruling has led to numerous discussions across the nation. No matter the profession, people appear to fall on both sides of the debate. Some are pleased with the decision. Others are not. It’s no surprise then, that people are on both sides of the controversy within the library profession as the court’s ruling will not end the union debate (Calvin, 2018).

**Why the Janus Decision Matters to Library Unions**
Carrie Smith writing in *American Libraries*, “Why the Janus Decision Matters to Library Unions. On June 27, the Supreme Court delivered a blow to public-sector unions that could affect many library workers. The 5–4 decision in Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) declares it unconstitutional for
public-sector unions to collect agency fees from nonmember employees based on free speech grounds.

Library workers in public, school, academic, and other libraries who are employed through state and local governments in the 22 states that are not already right-to-work states are affected by this decision (Smith, 2018a, 2018b).

August 2018

**Working class heroes: A look inside the Labor Archives of Washington.**

Conor Casey, archivist at the Labor Archives of Washington, gives us a glimpse of their collection on the University of Washington campus. Thousands of images, documents, records and more in the extensive Labor Archives of Washington, housed in the Special Collections area of UW Libraries. The archives are a collaborative project of the libraries with the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies (Casey, 2018).

September 2018

**CUPE 4951 welcomes municipal and library workers from the District of Fort St. James.**

FORT ST. JAMES, BC, Sept. 27, 2018 /CNW/ - CUPE welcomes Fort St. James municipal workers after a positive vote. Workers for the District, a small community located forty kilometers north of Vanderhoof and just two hours from Prince George, will now be represented by CUPE 4951. Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE, 2018e).

October 2018

**Jennifer Dorning Becomes President of the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE), First Woman to Lead an AFL-CIO Trade Department**

The Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE) announced at the end of August 2018, that DPE Assistant to the President Jennifer Dorning will become its next president, succeeding Paul E. Almeida. Dorning took office on September 1, 2018, becoming the third president and the first woman to lead DPE in its 40-plus year history. As the first female president of DPE, Dorning will also become the first woman to lead an AFL-CIO trade department. Dorning
has served as a member of the ALA-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) Salaries and Status of Library Workers committee and chair of the ALA-APA Unions subcommittee (Barrows, 2018).

**Surrey Librarians vote to join CUPE.**

SURREY, BC, Oct. 19, 2018 /CNW/ - Professional Librarians at Surrey Public Library have voted to become CUPE members in a Labour Board vote held on Wednesday. Issues important to professional librarians included organizational change that impacts services to the public and having a voice at work. “We warmly welcome professional librarians to our union, especially since October is National Library month” said Sub-local Chair, Denise Parks. “We look forward to representing them in the same robust, effective and innovative way we’ve represented all our members for the past 35 years.” Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE, 2018d).

**November 2018**

*Library Workers: Facts & Figures Fact Sheet 2018
An Overview of Library Professionals and Libraries* (Department of Professional Employees- AFL-CIO)

- In 2017, there were 194,000 librarians, 40,000 library technicians, and 96,000 library assistants employed. Generally, a “librarian” is a person who holds at least a master’s degree in library science or meets state teaching license standards for being a school librarian. “Library technicians” assist librarians in the acquisition, preparation, and organization of materials “and assist users in locating the appropriate resources.” “Library assistants” are similar to library technicians, but may have fewer responsibilities.
- From 2007 through 2017, cumulative employment among librarians, library technicians, and library assistants declined from
380,000 to 330,000.

- The mean annual earnings of librarians in 2017 were $60,760.
- The mean hourly wage of library technicians was $17.07 in 2017.
  (DPE-AFL-CIO, 2018. Para. 3)

Academic Librarians and Labor Unions: Attitudes and Experiences.
This research project investigates librarians’ attitudes toward unions and collective bargaining through data collected from a nationwide survey of 359 academic librarians in the United States. We found that academic librarians have a generally positive view of unions and collective bargaining agreements, a notable result in a national political atmosphere that is demonstrably anti-union. Union membership is strongly bound to faculty status. Our research results imply that unionization and collective bargaining provide stronger job protections and higher wages than faculty status alone, and suggest that discussions of faculty status in academic libraries may not have provided the best possible way to enhance the status of our profession.
  (Mills & McCullough, 2018).

Victoria Library Workers reject employer concession demands, endorse strike action.
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 410 members who work for the Greater Victoria Public Library voted more than 85 percent in favor of strike action during a balloted vote held Sunday. The vote comes on the heels of talks breaking off between the union and representatives of the Greater Victoria Public Library and Greater Victoria Labour Relations Association Saturday afternoon. “After bargaining collaboratively for more than a year to make significant progress on key issues, the employer presented workers with a list of concession demands,” said Helen Hughes, CUPE 410 president. “The employer refuses to move on its concession demands and refuses to answer key questions about sweeping changes proposed to scheduling and use of auxiliary workers” (CUPE, 2018c).

Creston Valley library workers ratify new agreement.
CRESTON, BC, Nov. 29, 2018 /CNW/ - CUPE 4959 and the Creston Library Association have signed off on a new collective agreement that includes a range of provisions and expanded benefits that will have a positive impact on families in the Valley, the local said today. Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE, 2019b).


“Special Report: Careers” AL editor, Carrie Smith introduces
unions in the library workplace, interviewing several librarians with varied perspectives on the services their unions provide.


“From Our Readers” a letter to the editor voicing support for the Janus decision on the grounds that “unions should not be immune from the competition of the marketplace” and that agency fees violated freedom of speech rights.

**December 2018**

*Toronto Library Workers begin public campaign to raise awareness about dangers of “Staffless Libraries.”*

The Toronto Public Library Workers Union (TPLWU) will begin conducting a public information picket to warn of the hazards of “staffless libraries,” an experimental project now being launched by the Toronto Public Library (TPL) Board at two branches, Todmorden Room in the east end and Swansea Memorial in the west end. “There is no other city service that requires you to sign away all your rights to hold the City accountable for injury or similar claims,” says Brendan Haley, President of the union, “even if the injury happened because of the library’s negligence or failure to provide enough security. This is very disturbing and we will advise City Council to look closely at this attempt to deprive patrons of legal rights they would otherwise have.” The initial union information picket was held Monday, December 3 at two locations: East York Community Centre and the S. Walter Stewart branch (Toronto Public Library Workers Union, 2018).

**A Plan to WIN! UC-AFT Ramps up Bargaining Campaign**

*A Plan to Win: Strategic Campaign Workshops for Librarian Bargaining.* UC-AFT is the union representing librarians (Unit 17) and non-Senate faculty (Unit 18) working throughout the UC system. Our members hold academic appointments as lecturers, program coordinators, supervisors of teacher education, and librarians. (University Council-AFT, 2018)
New agreement for Sechelt library workers makes important gains for precarious workers.

Workers for the Sechelt Public Library, represented by CUPE 391, are celebrating the recent ratification of their new collective agreement. After three days of collaborative negotiations, union and library representatives were able to reach a positive agreement that addresses key issues for precarious workers. “It was a productive round of negotiations, and we are thankful that the employer was receptive to improved conditions for casual workers,” said Aliza Nevarie, CUPE 391 president. “The addition of sick leave for casual workers, a right that should be universal for all workers, will make a huge difference for our members and their families” (CUPE, 2018a).

Editor’s Note: Union Library Workers blog, a project of the Progressive Librarians Guild, was established in 2002. Contributors over the years: Sarah Barriage, Vanesa E. Berasa, Braden Cannon, Craig Guild, Elaine Harger, Joanna Kerr, and Kathleen de la Peña McCook.

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strategic-campaign-workshops-for-librarian-bargaining/.


Resolution to Honor African Americans Who Fought Library Segregation

2017-2018 ALA CD#41_62118_ACT

2018 ALA Annual Conference

Whereas the system of “Jim Crow” laws and customs officially existed into the 1960s—a century after the official end of slavery in the United States;¹ ²

Whereas virulent racism, disenfranchisement, Black Codes, and racial segregation laws imposed a rigid system of officially sanctioned racial segregation in virtually all areas of life, including access to public libraries;¹ ²

Whereas, despite the work of African American librarians, including but not limited to Clara Stanton Jones, E.J. Josey, Albert P. Marshall and Virginia Lacy Jones, and the allies who stood with them to fight segregation, a large majority of the nation’s library community failed to address the injustices of segregated library services until the 1960s;³ ⁴ ⁵

Whereas, in many cases the American Library Association participated, both passively and actively, in the disenfranchisement

⁴ John Mark Tucker, Untold Stories: Civil Liberties, Libraries, and Black Librarianship, (Champaign, IL,1998), Publications Office, Graduate School of Library and Information Science.
⁵ Cheryl Knott, Not Free, Not for All, (Amherst, 2015), University of Massachusetts Press.
of African American librarians, depriving them of the resources of professional association;

Whereas the American Library Association continued to accept segregated public libraries as members into the 1960s; 3 4 5

Whereas the American Library Association filed no amicus curiae briefs in any of the local, state, and national lawsuits filed in the 1950s and 1960s to desegregate public libraries; 3

Whereas the nation’s library press reported nothing about the 1939 Alexandria (VA) Library sit-in by five young African Americans that took place two months after the American Library Association passed a Library Bill of Rights; 3

Whereas a sincere and heartfelt apology is an important and necessary first step in the process of reconciliation;

Whereas an apology for decades of injustices cannot erase the past, but a recognition of the wrongs committed and injustices ignored can help the nation’s library community confront the ghosts of its past: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the American Library Association

1. Acknowledges the fundamental injustice, cruelty, and inhumanity of racially segregated libraries;

2. Apologizes to African Americans for wrongs committed against them in segregated public libraries;

3. Commends African Americans who risked their lives to integrate public libraries for their bravery and courage in challenging segregation in public libraries and in forcing public libraries to live up to the rhetoric of their ideals;

4. Welcomes all African Americans to libraries, recognizing in particular those who were forced to use segregated libraries;

5. Encourages libraries to defend, in their policies and in their actions, the ALA Code of Ethics principle 1 – “We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests;” 6

6. Will review policy documents and internal procedures to ensure Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles are reflected throughout, and;

7. And be it further resolved that this resolution be printed in full in American Libraries and publicized widely via all media channels.

Mover: Sara Dallas, ALA Councilor-at-Large
Seconder: Jessica J. Schomberg, Councilor-at-Large

Seconders:

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Aaron Dobbs, LITA
Martin Garnar, IFRT
Eboni M. Henry, At-Large
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Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC)
Library and Information Technology Association (LITA)
Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA)
Public Library Association (PLA)
Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)
United for Libraries (Trustees, Friends, Foundations)
Young Adult Library Services (YALSA)
American Indian Library Association
Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services
Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA)
Black Caucus of ALA
Chinese American Librarians Association
Joint Conference of Librarians of Color
REFORMA
Arkansas Library Association
Arizona Library Association
Colorado Association of Libraries
Connecticut Library Association
District of Columbia Library Association
Hawaii Library Association
Idaho Library Association
Illinois Library Association
Michigan Library Association
Minnesota Library Association
Mississippi Library Association
Missouri Library Association
Nebraska Library Association
New Hampshire Library Association
New Jersey Library Association
New Mexico Library Association
New York Library Association
North Carolina Library Association
Ohio Library Council
Pennsylvania Library Association
Rhode Island Library Association
South Carolina Library Association
Utah Library Association
Virginia Library Association
Ethnic and Multicultural Exchange Round Table (EMIERT)
Federal and Armed Forces Libraries (FAFLRT)
Intellectual Freedom Roundtable (IFRT)
International Relations Round Table (IRRT)
Games and Gaming Round Table (GAMERT)
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT)
Library History Round Table (LHRT)
Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT)
New Members Round Table (NMRT)
Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT)
Sustainability Roundtable (SustainRT)
ACRL – Professional Values Committee
ALA Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE)
ALA Committee on Diversity
Chapter Relations Committee
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LaJuan Pringle, ALA Member – Resolution Working Group
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Progressive Librarians Guild
Statement on Racist Incident at ALA Midwinter and Call for Critical Inquiry into Institutional Practices that Reproduce Forms of Oppression

February 15, 2019

In the aftermath of an incident of unprovoked racial abuse, and reports of harassment of non-cisgender individuals during the midwinter meetings of the American Library Association, ALA’s Governing Council members and other units of the ALA have been compelled to address how to support those adversely affected by such abuse. This has meant providing resources to contextualize the implicit bias underlying these incidents, attempting to hold individuals and structures accountable for their actions, as well as writing an open letter and numerous statements such as:

• Statements from various ALA units as gathered by Diedre Conkling, available at https://bit.ly/2HU9FaF

Taking strong action to name the problem and to support individuals in doing the requisite personal work to address their biases is essential. The PLG echoes the recommendations ALA Councilor April Hathcock has made for next steps within the ALA, including:

• Convening a working group of the Executive Board to examine the Council Forum and find ways to make it a safer space;
• Reviewing and strengthening the current Conference Code of Conduct reporting process to make it more effective;
• Arranging for facilitated racial equity training for the Annual Conference Council Session I, building that training and the Code of Conduct into future Council Orientation sessions; and
• Coordinating with the Office for Diversity, Literacy, and...
Outreach Services to provide online and in-person resources on equity, diversity, and inclusion

- (SEE https://aprilhathcock.wordpress.com/2019/01/30/alamw-what-happened-and-what-should-happen-next/)

Alongside these recommendations, it is equally important that work be done to identify and change the institutional practices that sustain the environment for such hateful incidents. This dynamic, for example, was at play when ALA lawyer, Paula Goedert, acted in a way that caused April Hathcock to feel silenced by the ALA’s prioritizing legal defense over her dignity and emotional well-being. Such action stands in great contrast to the long overdue message of empathy the ALA sent in issuing an official apology last year for its history of involvement in Jim Crow segregation.

The PLG believes that its members and others can contribute to this work by taking a critical look at the manner in which institutional practices reproduce oppression. To help move the profession forward in regards to racism and other “isms” at both the individual and institutional levels within ALA and beyond, the PLG would like to offer the following questions that — when honestly, meaningfully engaged with — we believe can help spur the dialogue necessary for such forward motion:

- How might using a racial, social, and/or restorative justice lens inform instructions given to lawyers by librarians, library directors and board members in such moments?
- How should the ALA address other aspects of the legacy of racism in librarianship? For example, should the ALA apologize for the racist incidents surrounding the creation and 1978 release of the film The Speaker?
- How can we hold the ALA and other professional spaces accountable when micro-aggressions and verbal abuse happen to members and other attendees?
- How can resources and trainings that assist librarians in engaging with their own biases be made accessible and better utilized?

The PLG encourages our members, as well as other librarians and information professionals, to assist in these endeavors. We hope the work done on these issues will one day lead to the ALA, and librarianship at large, having “an environment of welcome, inclusion, and participation of all ages, genders, races, languages, socio-economic and educational backgrounds in the development and provision of library services and resources,” in keeping with the PLG’s own commitments (available at http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/content/commitments.shtml).