

Progressive Librarians Guild Endorses *International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance*

“As technologies that facilitate State surveillance of communications advance, States are failing to ensure that laws and regulations related to communications surveillance adhere to international human rights and adequately protect the rights to privacy and freedom of expression. This document attempts to explain how international human rights law applies in the current digital environment, particularly in light of the increase in and changes to communications surveillance technologies and techniques. These principles can provide civil society groups, industry, States and others with a framework to evaluate whether current or proposed surveillance laws and practices are consistent with human rights.

These principles are the outcome of a global consultation with civil society groups, industry and international experts in communications surveillance law, policy and technology.”

- *International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance*

The full text of the *International Principles*, as well as the list of signatories, can be found at <https://en.necessaryandproportionate.org/text>.

Union Library Workers Blog

A reminder to check out unionlibraryworkers.blogspot.ca for news items on union activity in libraries, archives, and the information sector around the world. The posts on this blog are condensed yearly in the union reviews published in *Progressive Librarian*. The latest union review, “‘Library Workers Will Not Be Shushed’: 2012 Union Review”, can be found in Issue 41.

Know of union activity that has not been featured on the blog? Please feel free to forward relevant news items to sarahbarriage@gmail.com.

Report on PLG Edmonton Symposium

PLG Edmonton hosted our annual symposium, Organize and Assemble III, on October 26, 2013. This year's theme was precarious labour, and the seven excellent presentations engaged with the topic from theoretical, personal and professional perspectives.

Keynote speaker Dr. Anna Altman discussed her experiences with precarious labour over the course of her distinguished career as a professor of library and information studies.

This was followed by a talk by Dr. Michael McNally and MLIS student Brandy Mowatt, who offered compelling theoretical and material understandings of precarity by investigating its relation to risk.

Dr. Tami Oliphant discussed changing trends in the availability of permanent full time work in the information professions, using Amazon.com's business model as a structuring example.

Librarian Dana Ouellette boldly outlined the precarity of the working conditions of librarians at Christian post-secondary institutions in Alberta, who are not guaranteed collective bargaining rights in this province.

Dr. Toni Samek and librarian Taryn Lough presented their research on Canadian university social software guidelines, identifying an alarming trend towards undermining academic freedom in the name of university branding.

The final two presentations discussed the Temporary Foreign Worker program in Alberta. Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, spoke about the problematic and exploitative program and its impact on the Alberta labour market, and librarians Lindsey Whitson and Alex Carruthers presented their research into the limitations of and potential for public library services to temporary foreign workers, with an emphasis on the unique conditions of Brooks, Alberta.

Organize and Assemble III welcomed 43 attendees from across the information professions and beyond. Thanks to the symposium committee, presenters and attendees for making the event a success!

Update on NYLA Social Responsibilities Round Table

Fred Stoss called a gathering of like-minded librarians together at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the New York Library Association and by a large consensus, the NYLA Social Responsibilities Round Table has been brought back to life. The first order of business is selecting a slate of officers and program planning for the NYLA 2014 Annual Meeting. For further information, contact Fred Stoss at fstoss@buffalo.edu.

Forthcoming Book on Progressive Librarianship

Shiraz Durrani has authored a book entitled *Progressive Librarianship: Perspectives from Kenya and Britain*. From the press release:

“Public spending is under threat and public libraries are suffering. At a time when libraries can play a critical role in supporting people facing difficult economic and social situations, the dominant conservative model of librarianship has nothing meaningful to say about the role and relevance of libraries. It offers more of the same, but no qualitative change so necessary today. It continues to maintain the myth that there is no alternative to its own policies and practices. There is thus an urgent need for alternative ideas and practices to address people’s needs.

The progressive librarianship movement – in USA, Europe and other places - is taking up this challenge. It has also been active in Kenya and Britain but its work is not widely known. The Kenyan movement differed from the others in that it grew within the underground political movement in the 1980s – the December Twelve Movement. It was its Library Cell that set out its ideas on what a relevant library service should be and put many of its ideas into practice. This experience later reached Britain.

Using original documents, this book records this hidden history. In the process, it examines key concepts such as the role of libraries and the relevance of service. Linking library work with the wider social and political concerns, the book explores issues such as politics of information, the role of activism and “neutrality” in library work. Deriving ideas from practice, it offers an alternative approach to librarianship, to the training of librarians and to organisational change to make libraries more relevant to people’s lives. The book will be of interest to library staff and professionals, students and teachers of librarianship as well as to political activists and historians.

In this book on progressive library movement, Shiraz Durrani challenges us to look at the concept and practice of library differently, while also providing invaluable information on the alternatives in both Kenya and Britain. He thus continues the critical tradition he has already established with his earlier works, particularly, *Never Be Silent*. It’s all right to be silent inside a library but never about a library.”

– Ngugi wa Thiong’o

Progressive Librarianship will be published in May 2014. A review copy of the book can be ordered from Vita Books.

PLG Member Participated in National Public Health Exhibition

PLG member Lincoln Cushing helped supply posters and images for an exhibition at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta about public health, and was able to make sure several local artists were in the mix. For more information, visit: <http://kaiserpermanentehistory.org/latest/public-health-exhibition-at-centers-for-disease-control-and-prevention/>

REFORMA Files Brief in Lawsuit Challenging Arizona's Ban on Ethnic Studies

On November 25, 2013, REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, joined the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) and several other education, library, and free-speech organizations in filing an amicus brief with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in *Arce v. Huppenthal*, a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Arizona Revised Statute §15-112(A).

The amicus brief filed by these organizations supports Arizona's students and teachers who challenged the statute that led to the disbanding of Tucson's Mexican-American Studies (MAS) program. The claim argues that the law violates Arizona students' First Amendment rights to receive information and is unconstitutionally overbroad. The Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) dismantled the MAS program and removed books from classrooms as a result of the passing of the statute.

To view the text of the amicus brief, visit http://www.ftrf.org/?Current_Cases

“In REFORMA we are concerned with the needs of Latino communities with regards to information and library materials such as books and online sources” said Isabel Espinal, REFORMA's president. “It is important that Latino children have access to books and curriculum about their own heritage and in their own languages. Without this information they simply cannot thrive as full human beings.” Espinal also remarked that the availability of these materials and the teaching of these historical notions are important not only for Latinos but for all members of society: “resentment and damage are created when there is exclusion of our history and our stories,” she pointed out.

In 2012, REFORMA condemned the dismantling of the MAS program and spearheaded an effort to get the library community to take a stand. REFORMA's 2012 resolution can be found here: http://www.reforma.org/resolution_az

REFORMA's partners in filing this brief are the following organizations: the American Library Association, Freedom to Read Foundation, American Booksellers Association for Free Expression, Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, National Association for Ethnic Studies, National Coalition Against Censorship, and the National Council of Teachers of English.

REFORMA is a national organization of library and information professionals committed to promoting the development of library collections that include Spanish language and Latino oriented materials. The organization strongly advocates for culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate library services, programs and materials to meet the information and cultural needs of the Latino community. For more information on REFORMA, visit www.reforma.org

See PLG's Statement on Censorship and the Tucson Unified School District at <http://progressivelibrariansguild.org/content/tusd.shtml>

Authors Guild Lawsuit Against Google Books Dismissed

Earlier this month, the lawsuit that the Authors Guild had brought against Google Books in 2005 was dismissed. From the [article](#) that circulated on the PLG discussion list:

“US Circuit Judge Denny Chin said the book scanning amounted to fair use because it was “highly transformative” and because it didn’t harm the market for the original work.

“Google Books provides significant public benefits,” Chin wrote, describing it as “an essential research tool” and noting that the scanning service has expanded literary access for the blind and helped preserve the text of old books from physical decay.

Chin also rejected the theory that Google was depriving authors of income, noting that the company does not sell the scans or make whole copies of books available. He concluded, instead, that Google Books served to help readers discover new books and amounted to “new income from authors.”

Some of the discussions on the Progressive Librarians Guild and Social Responsibilities Round Table listservs surrounding the outcome of this lawsuit can be found on the Library Juice website at <http://libraryjuicepress.com/blog/?p=4344>. Additional comments from Elisabeth Jones can be found at <http://elisabethjones.wordpress.com/2013/11/20/what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-the-google-books-fair-use-decision/>.

PLG members can access the archive of the discussion on the PLG listserv at <https://lists.sonic.net/mailman/listinfo/progressivelibrariansguild>.

Have an update you’d like to see included in next month’s bulletin?

Send it to sarahbarriage@gmail.com