

Progressive Library Organizations Update, 2013–2017

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ABSTRACT: This article is a five-year update to the author's book, *Progressive Library Organizations: A Worldwide History*, published by McFarland in 2015. It includes information on all the organizations covered in the book except the Library and Information Workers Organisation of South Africa which folded in 2000. These six organizations are from Austria, Germany, Sweden, UK, and US. The analysis is based on several new interviews in 2017, documents, publications, correspondence, and much personal experience. These organizations are in various states of health, and two of them have transformed into new structures. We can take heart that activist librarians continue to organize themselves to push back against the neoliberalism that pervades our profession and the world at-large.

Keywords: library history, progressive librarianship

Publisher's note: This article was originally published with incorrect bibliographic information in footnote 45 (p. 51) on 8 June 2016. The information was corrected on 22 June 2018. In addition, the names Anka Scharnhorst, Klaus Ihlau, and Michael Roeder on p.24 were corrected on 6 July 2018. The publisher apologizes for these errors.



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Journal of Radical Librarianship, Vol. 4 (2018) pp.20–52. Published 8 June 2018.

At the end of the preface of my book, *Progressive Library Organizations: A Worldwide History*,¹ I wrote that I hoped to update the book every few years. Although the book was published in 2015, the information was up-to-date only to 2012 and part of 2013 in some cases. This is the first update covering 2013 to 2017.

Research for this article was undertaken in 2017, and interviews were done with key people in May of that year in Sweden, Germany, and Austria. I have again used Google Translate extensively to read documents in Swedish and German. I have also had a number of productive email exchanges with interviewees and other activists in the following months. I did not do interviews in the US or UK. US interviews were unnecessary because I am still heavily involved in the two US organizations. Interviews in the UK were unnecessary because Information for Social Change has evolved into only a journal with a website and blog. This article covers all the groups represented in my book except for the Library and Information Workers Organisation (LIWO) of South Africa which officially disbanded in 2000 but actually stopped its activities in 1998.

Sweden, Bibliotek i Samhälle (BiS) [Libraries in Society]

In my 2015 book, I noted that BiS was in transition and that many of the founding activists were stepping back and handing over to a younger generation. It appears that this transition is still going on. A few of the older activists are still working with newer younger members. Interviewees said that Lennart Wettmark is solely missed since his retirement. One of his many accomplishments was longtime editorship of the *BIS* journal. The older generation still meets once per year to socialize and discuss issues.

But even so, BiS is currently the most active European organization addressed here. For example, their website had 13,896 visitors in 2017. Although the number has fluctuated over the years, it is an increase of 34% over 2013. At the end of 2017, there were 1347 followers on Facebook and 2621 followers on Twitter. The percentage increase over 2013 was 245% for Facebook and 144% for Twitter. Membership has fluctuated between 157 (2017) and 207 (2014) during this period. They print 500 copies of each issue of the journal, which go to members and subscribers, leaving 80–90 copies available for distribution at meetings and events.²

The stalwarts note a big change in Swedish society in the last five years, and miss the bravery and deep commitment of many of the past activists. It is much harder to be brave in the current environment. The younger folks often feel that since they represent their libraries, they therefore need permission to take on various BiS activities and responsibilities. Neoliberalism permeates their workplaces as well as society, and they feel they must be much more careful than in the past. They are also working hard in their jobs and have less time for BiS activities. Nobody has been fired for taking part in BiS activities, but at least two people in different areas of the country have been fired for starting to publish small numbers of books. One interviewee said that new folks emphasize socialism in discussions, but it is now harder to act.

One of the most important achievements over this period was the renewal of the journal,

also titled *Bibliotek i Samhälle*, with a total graphical makeover for improved readability. This resulted in renewed government funding by the Swedish Arts Council, without which the journal might have folded. Perhaps a central issue was explicitly confronted in the second issue of 2013 titled in translation, “The Death of the Profession?” This referred to deprofessionalization, commercialization, and neoliberal management. Other journal issue topics over this period were: censorship, children’s services, work environment and unions, literature and reading, library ideology including feminism and political participation, internationalism, services to users, commercialism, uses of digital data, library creativity, library space and place, literary quality, language policies, critical information skills, outreach, and the normalization of racism and fascist threat to libraries.

In the past, BiS was very active in presenting seminars at the Gothenburg Book and Library Fair, and in fact had only missed one from 1998 to 2012. Although BiS published an anti-racism manifesto in 2013,³ their application to do a program on this topic was rejected by the Fair authorities. This is perhaps an indicator of the general rise of racism and xenophobia in Sweden (and around the world). One BiS activist noted that this manifesto was more important than ever in the light of these trends. He also highlighted BiS’ work on LGBT rights in the past few years. BiS was also absent from the 2014 Fair. Their 2015 topic was titled, “People’s Library and the Profession’s Responsibility.” They did not participate in the fair in 2016. BiS along with other organizations boycotted the 2017 event over the Fair’s decision to exhibit a neo-Nazi publication, and they distributed pamphlets about the boycott at the Swedish Library Association annual conference. For more on the boycott, see the 2017 section below. BiS also often presents at the annual Socialist Forum.

BiS’ two successful international solidarity projects during this period have been with Palestine and Western Sahara. Notably, they collected 30,000 kroner (about \$4000) for the National Palestinian Reading Festival outside Nablus in the West Bank in 2016.⁴ And from 2010–12, they raised about 220,000 kroner (about \$27,000) to distribute 35,000 copies of a children’s book translated into Arabic to Saharans in refugee camps in Algeria and elsewhere. They also paid the salary of a librarian in one of the camps for one year.⁵ Both projects have been completed now, but BiS is still collecting funds for Palestine. Incredibly, from a US perspective, they have had no political problems in supporting Palestine and even gained support. BiS worked with Librarians and Archivists with Palestine and the Swedish Palestine solidary organization, *Palestinagrupperna*, to do a book discussion. The Swedish Library Association (*Svensk Biblioteksörening*, SB) has many international projects, but BiS is not consulted on any of them, even though BiS has experience and expertise. In 2015, individual BiS members suggested to the SB that they needed an international secretary, but nothing came of it. The SB’s response was that they have greatly increased their work in IFLA during the previous five years.

As reported in my book, BiS has had good relations with the Swedish Library Association (*Svensk Biblioteksörening*, SB) since the 1990s. At least one BiS member has sat on their board over this period, and many BiS members are active members of SB. One interviewee said that the SB knows us well and listens to us, although we may not always push as hard as some would like, we do have some effect on their activities and positions.

Perhaps one of the hottest topics of discussion over the past two years has been the

development of a national library strategy. BiS is in favor of a national strategy and issued a document laying out their position on libraries' role in the development of society.⁶ This document is now on the government's strategy website. A further document was issued after the 2017 annual meeting.⁷ Although the document was well received, one stalwart noted that three of the six libraries in her district have been privatized.

BiS continues to have a strong presence, but its activities are more limited than in the past. The publication of the journal may be its most enduring legacy. Its programs and protests at national library conferences, book fairs, and socialist meetings are its most important continuing activities. These are supplemented with a few manifestos and policy papers which likely have some useful effect on the SB, and local and national government.

Highlights by Year⁸

2013

Even with a dues increase, membership increased 27% over the previous year to 181, and there were 810 followers on their Twitter account and 391 participants on Facebook. There were 9392 visitors to the website. The board only met once this year, in Stockholm, and much of the business was conducted online. BiS produced an anti-racism manifesto which was received with great interest at the Swedish Library Association's (SB) Library Days conference in Örebro. However, their anti-racism seminar was outrageously rejected for the Gothenburg Book and Library Fair, where they had done seminars every year except one since 1998. BiS commented on the government's reading culture report.⁹ The four issues of the journal concentrated on the following themes: Censorship, Death of the Profession? Children, and Work Environment. BiS lost its state funding this year of 25,000 kr.

2014

Membership increased 14% to 207, Twitter followers increased 51% to 1224 on, and Facebook followers increased 60% to 624. There were 9245 visitors to the website. 15 members participated at their annual meeting. The board again did much of its business by email, and only met once this year, in Malmö. They adopted a statement in response to escalating fascist violence in society and signed the Librarians and Archivists with Palestine statement on the Israeli assault on Gaza.¹⁰ Andrea Berge, Tobias Willstedt, and Marika Lindgren Åsbrink discussed the privatization of public libraries at the Socialist Forum in Stockholm on November 22nd. About 50 people attended. The Western Sahara project came to an end this year.¹¹ Lena Lundgren represented BiS at the SB's Library Days conference in Umeå where she presented on their anti-racism programs. And BiS organized a meeting for students in Malmö. The four issues of the journal concentrated on the following themes: Literature and Reading, Public Libraries for All, Internationalism, and the User Library. The journal received honorable mention in the awarding of the Oscar Olsson Prize in Folk Education. Again, BiS did not receive any state funding.

2015

BiS ended the year with 198 members, and there were also 183 subscriptions to the journal.

There were 9565 visitors to the website. The BiS board had four meetings during the year: in Kista, Lund, Botkyrka, and Gothenburg. Again, 15 members participated at the annual meeting in Stockholm, where Tobias Willstedt presented on “Commercialism’s Negative Effects,” followed by a lively discussion. After an absence of three years, BiS was back at the Gothenburg Book and Library Fair attracting a large audience with a seminar titled, “People’s Library and the Profession’s Responsibility.” This was in conjunction with Friends of the Folk Library in Gothenburg. It was moderated by the Friend’s Ulla Forsén, and the speakers were Randi Myhre, Gülüzar Tuna, Mattias Reuterberg, and Ewa Skogslund. BiS again participated in the Socialist Forum with a program titled, “Support Reading and Freedom of Information in Occupied Palestine.” Speakers were Balsam Karam, Lena Lundgren, and Tobias Willstedt. The board decided to give the funds collected in the BiS International Solidarity Fund to the reading festival outside Nablus in the West Bank in April 2016. BiS was disappointed when the Swedish government declined to recognize Western Sahara as a state. BiS held a poster exhibit and successful pub evening at the Swedish Library Association’s Library Days in Lund. Probably due to reinvigoration of the journal, the Swedish Arts Council again provided funding for the publication of the journal.

2016

BiS ended the year with 177 members, and the number of subscriptions to the journal was 174. There were 7507 visitors to the website, a drop of over 2000 from the previous year. But there were 1979 Twitter followers at mid-year, a 62% increase from the end of 2014. There were 1128 Facebook followers at mid-year, a 45% increase over the end of 2014. The board had four meetings, all in Stockholm. Only 11 members attended the annual meeting in Lund, but there was an interesting discussion on the “creative library.” BiS was absent from the Gothenburg Book and Library Fair and the Socialist Forum. They did have a presence at the Swedish Library Association’s Library Days in Västerås, a poster exhibition on anti-racism. Through the Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, BiS supported a reading festival that was part of National Palestinian Reading Week outside Nablus in the West Bank. BiS succeeded in collecting 30,000 kroner for the festival, about \$4000. The project was featured in issue 3/4 of the journal, and a more detailed report is on the website. The *BIS* journal again received funding from the Swedish government’s Arts Council.

2017

There were 157 members at the end of 2017. BiS joined the boycott of the Gothenburg Library and Book Fair this year because of the decision to approve the exhibition of a neo-Nazi publication, *Nya Tider* (New Times).¹² BiS members think that this is an example of the normalization of racism and Nazism, and it is not a free speech issue. It is a threat to the groups targeted in the publication, and therefore may have prevented targeted people from attending the fair. They also argue that private organizations may cooperate with whoever they choose, and do not have to include Nazis. For example, the publisher Ersatz joined the boycott because of Nazi harassment of libraries in Nacka and Ekerö. Many authors, poets, and publishers have endorsed the boycott, but not the SB. Instead, BiS decided to participate in one of the two alternative fairs organized at the same time as the usual fair. BiS activists handed out hundreds of pamphlets at the SB annual meeting advocating the boycott.¹³ BiS also actively debated library privatizations this year with several exchanges.¹⁴ The other most

discussed issues on the website this year were:¹⁵ the fate of the international collection at the Stockholm City Library, the state of library policy in the US after the election of Donald Trump, the right-wing threat to libraries, the boycott of the Book Fair and support for alternative fairs, the decline of the use and closing of public libraries, the privatization of public libraries in Nacka, and the end of net neutrality in the US.

Germany, AK Kritische Bibliothek (KB) [Working Group Critical Library]

As reported in my book, Arbeitskreis kritischer BibliothekarInnen (Akriebie) [Working Group of Critical Librarians] disbanded in 2012, at the very end of my book research. This decision was made at the 2011 German national library congress. Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen, Peter Jobmann and his future wife Alexandra, Hacer Manap, and others determined to form a new group to promote the library as a basic instrument of democracy. Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen, one of the key Akribie people over many years, along with the technical help of Ronny Patzelt (and more recently Ronny Sternecker), started a new blog and website almost immediately thereafter, Kritische Bibliothek, lately referred to as AK Kritische Bibliothek.¹⁶ The aim was to preserve much of the Akribie documentation, create a space for continued interdisciplinary discussions, and to continue to organize as much as possible. KB has held programs at all the national library conferences in Germany since that time. They were all moderated by Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen.

The most active people in KB continue to be Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen, Peter Jobmann and Peter Delin. The most active people focusing on Berlin are Anka Scharnhorst, Klaus Ihlau, and Michael Roeder. In May of 2017, there were about 50 people on the email list, mostly from Berlin, but the listserv is not very active.

KB also regularly participates in the Berlin Working Group on District Libraries, AK Berliner Stadtteilbibliotheken, which is comprised of half librarians and half members of the public who are engaged with libraries. They also work with the i.d.a.-Dachverband (German-Speaking Network of Women/Lesbian Libraries and Archives)¹⁷ and its Berlin chapter. The Berlin chapter has had some small successes in winning longer opening hours and better conditions. The national group works on the professional education and training of women, and documentation of the East German women's movement. They have created a meta-catalog and open digital archive. Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen is also engaged with a women's history group.

The group has sent at least two letters in support of Berlin libraries, which have been drastically downsized since German reunification. And Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen used this theme when she spoke at a 2015 rally before the handover of 20,000 signatures against outsourcing of collection development for Berlin libraries. Berlin has lost two-thirds of its libraries in the past twenty years, from 200 to 65! The 1995 plan for the improvement of libraries has never been approved by Parliament. As before reunification, KB wants every person in Berlin to again live within one and one-half kilometers of a library. Currently, it is only within five to six kilometers. Personnel cuts have made this impossible.

KB is obviously a much smaller and weaker group than its predecessor, Akribie. Nevertheless, its programs at national library conferences and its work with a local Berlin organization and the national women's network are important voices in the German library environment.

Highlights by Year¹⁸

2012

KB's program at the national library congress in Hamburg was titled, "Dare More Democracy: A New Basic Understanding for Library Work." The papers were: "Right-Wing Extremism – Dangers and Actions for Public Libraries" by Gerhard Zschau and "A Profession Without a Job Description – An Attempt to Put a New Foundation on Library Action" by Peter Jobmann. (Note that the 2012 information here is included because it was not in the book.)

2013

The 2012 theme was continued at the 2013 national library congress in Leipzig. This session was presented by the same two authors who concentrated on more specific aspects of democracy in libraries.

2014

KB's program at the 103rd library congress in Bremen was titled, "Building on the Tempelhofer Field or the Search for the Ideal Location for a New Central and National Library." There were two papers: "A Metropolitan Library for Berlin: Educational Prestige Object or Modern Reading Temple as a City Council Forum?" by Anke Penski and "Moderation and Supplementary Comments to the Present State of the Planning Discussion" by Ms. Thomke. This discussion revolved around the very controversial idea of putting the new library on the grounds of the old airport. And this year, the Berlin Working Group on District Libraries sent an open letter to the Mayor and Senate Chancellery of Berlin and the Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs demanding support for a new direction for Berlin libraries. The letter noted that two-thirds of the Berlin district libraries had been closed since the 1990s, and this had to be addressed urgently.

2015

KB's program at the national library congress in Nuremberg was titled, "Gender and Diversity in Libraries." Dr. Karin Aleksander and Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen discussed three topics: "The Meta-Database of the German-Speaking Women's, Lesbian and Gender Libraries and Archives," "Gender and Women's History in the Netherlands," and "From the Snowden Files to the Snowden Commons: The Public Library as a Democratic Laboratory: A Workshop Report." On July 13th of this year, Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen gave a speech at a rally against the outsourcing of media selection in the Central and Regional Library of Berlin, just before the handover of 20,000 signatures against this move. She represented both the KB and the Working Group of Berlin District Libraries. The speech also addressed the poor funding of libraries and the loss of two-thirds of the public libraries in the past twenty years.

2016

KB's program at the national library congress in Leipzig was titled, "Berlin – Copenhagen: What is the Future of Large Public Libraries?" The papers were respectively given by Peter Delin for Berlin and Beate Detlefs for Copenhagen. Besides restructuring, one of the common themes was the radical reduction of collections.

2017

KB's program at the national library congress in Frankfurt was titled, "The Future of Public Libraries: Information Site or Leisure Paradise?" Peter Delin and Jochen Dudeck presented papers. Delin noted that the central role of books is being marginalized, and that libraries are threatened as places of education and information in favor of events, makerspaces, and leisure activities. However, there are also counter-examples such as in Seattle, Doha (Qatar), and Caen (France). He also noted the citizen's movement that has preserved the New York Public Library. And another letter in support of Berlin public libraries with a long list of wishes and demands was sent to Klaus Lederer, the newly appointed head of the Berlin Senate Culture Administration. Although he is from the Left Party (De Linke), KB members are not optimistic, although they did get a formal response. One key point was to eliminate cost per unit accounting, that is, emphasizing statistics instead of the quality of services.

Austria, Arbeitskreis kritischer Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare (KRIBIBI) [Working Group of Critical Librarians]

As noted in my book, KRIBIBI was set up as an "open circle" or "working group," with no formal membership. And it was supported from its inception until recently by the Karl Renner Institute, the think-tank of the Austrian Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, SPÖ). And as also described in the book, there was almost a complete generational change of leadership in 2009 when six women stepped forward to collectively take the lead. But they all resigned as of November 2011. At that point, a few of the previous stalwarts came to the rescue. They were Nikolaus Hamann, Ulrike Retschizegger, and Maria Binder. Nikolaus Hamann has become the public face of the group, while Ulrike Retschizegger has concentrated on internal organizing and finances. Even though there were only a few leaders, these committed activists continued the usual activities of the group. They had substantive annual conferences and organized other important meetings, especially continuing education sessions.

And they continued to advocate for an official government policy for libraries including a library law, first advocated by the SPÖ in 2006 and two years later by the Green Party. Neither program was approved. (In fact, the SPÖ voted against the Green Party program.) Austria's public library system is unlike any other in Western Europe. Of 2357 communities in the country, 1400 do not have public libraries (59%)! Only 40% of the libraries are run by their local governments, 17% are run by parishes, and 30.5% are run by partnerships between governments, parishes or other bodies. More astoundingly, only 10% of librarians are actually paid for full-time work. 6.5% are paid for part-time work, and 83% are volunteers. Further, many of the volunteers have library qualifications. Because of this poor

support for libraries, only 12% of the population actually visits a library once a year.¹⁹ One of KRIBIBI's core principles is that everyone should have easy access to a public library staffed by paid professional librarians.

With neo-liberalism spreading across the society, academic library positions are more precarious. Academic libraries are working on the project model. It is now common to hire people on two-year or even ten-month contracts. Nikolaus Hamann is on the governing board of the Vereinigung Österreichischer Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare (VÖB, academic librarians association), and through his advocacy they have established a working group to deal with this precarious job situation.

KRIBIBI also works to reform library education. Much education is on the job. There are currently three courses for academic libraries, but no regular university programs. In addition, the current courses are rather expensive, over 5000 Euros compared to cheap education in other fields. School library education is varied with eight different models. KRIBIBI advocates for one education system with different branches. So far there has been no interest by the Ministry of Education or mainstream library organizations.

Over this time period, their most important meeting was the “International Conference on Freedom of Information Under Pressure: Control, Crisis, Culture,” which was held 28 February to 1 March 2014 in Vienna. It was co-sponsored by the University of Vienna, Transform European Network, and the Karl Renner Institute. Support came from the Mayor and Governor of the City of Vienna, a number of other journalism associations, media organizations, and universities. The conference gathered librarians and journalists from seven European countries to address freedom of information, surveillance, censorship, and the prosecution of media, journalists, and whistleblowers (including Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange). Nikolaus Hamann gave a paper titled, “Openness—Democracy—Political Transformation and Libraries.”²⁰ Several of the keynote speakers were from Greece, where the official Hellenic Broadcasting Service had been abolished less than one year before the conference, and where 2656 employees had been fired, although many found a way to subversively keep broadcasting.²¹

Another important project in 2015 addressed the need for public libraries to deal with the needs of students in writing their pre-academic essays in order to pass their secondary school exit exams, their *Matura* diploma, which is necessary to proceed to higher education.²² KRIBIBI partnered with many cultural organizations and libraries to publish a book describing how twenty-two libraries faced this problem. Fifty copies were printed and 60 more were given to schools by the Ministry of Education.²³

KRIBIBI functioned normally from 2013 to 2016, but with a very small number of volunteers who held the group together. They managed to hold annual conferences every year and had good programs with interesting speakers. They were also instrumental in organizing an international conference on freedom of information and the publication of a book on how public libraries cope with helping students prepare for their exams. Their influence on the profession was limited, but Nikolaus Hamann's work stands out. Their influence on their sponsoring organization, the Renner Institute of the SPÖ, and therefore the national government, was also very limited.

In January 2017, the SPÖ's Karl Renner Institute withdrew funding from KRIBIBI. This shocking development necessitated a change in structure and conception if the group was going to continue to exist. At the first night of its November 2017 conference, KRIBIBI decided to become a formal membership organization. They dropped continuing education meetings, established a dues structure, and began the work of recruiting members. As a formal organization, there is hope that KRIBIBI might become more effective in influencing the national library organizations and the profession in general, and perhaps be more effective in influencing government policies. At the end of the year, KRIBIBI had 33 personal and three institutional members from across the country, 130 followers on Facebook and 64 followers on Twitter. For more, see the 2017 section below.

Highlights by Year²⁴

2012

KRIBIBI's 2012 annual conference was titled, "On the Ladder to Library Paradise." Nikolaus Hamann introduced a panel of five distinguished speakers by quoting two authors: "The library stands there like a ladder to infinity," Alfred Polgar, and "I have always imagined paradise as a kind of library," Jorge Luis Borges. But Hamann noted that no library could "...offer everything that has ever been conceived, written down, or digitally published." Evidently collection development was really the main topic of discussion. The panelists were: Mag. Markus Feigl, Head of the Vienna Public Libraries and Chairman of the BVÖ [Büchereiverband Österreichs, Austrian public library association]; Erwin Miedtke, Deputy Head of the Bremen City Library; Anita Ruckerbauer, Honorary Director of the Public Library Golling in Salzburg; Gerhard Ruiss, Spokesperson of the IG Autoren [Austrian writers association], and Mag. Werner Schöggel, Head of the Federal Coordination Office LITERACY. (KRIBIBI's 2012 annual conference was not reported in my book, therefore it is reported here.)

2013

KRIBIBI's annual conference theme was, "Copyright, Copyleft, Copywrong: Intellectual Property in a Digital World." The speakers were Dr. Eckhard Höffner, commercial lawyer and author of two volumes on copyright; Nikolaus Hamann; Mrs. Prof. Dr. Gabriele Beger, lawyer and director of the Hamburg State and University Library; and Mag. Gerald Leitner.

2014

KRIBIBI's annual conference theme was "Are All Things New? The Profession of Librarian is Changing." This concretely focused on existing library education and proposals for change. The speakers were Peter Job, Buxtehude Public Library in Germany and democracy educator, Markus Feigl, BVÖ Strobl; Fabrizio Sommovilla, Academy of Fine Arts; and Eva Ramminger, Technical University Vienna. Workshops were also given by Susanne Kappos, Vienna Libraries and Werner Schöggel, Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The International Conference on Freedom of Information Under Pressure: Control, Crisis, Culture was held this year. See the beginning of the Austria section above for more description about the conference.

2015

KRIBIBI's annual conference theme was "Ethical Action in Libraries." Unlike many other countries, Austria does not have a library code of ethics, there are no legal regulations, and there is no common library training. The opening speech was given by Prof. Dr. med. Oliver Bendel, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, Zurich. His talk was titled, "From the 'Library' to the 'Cyborg' and Back: A Walk through the Conceptual World of Information Ethics." The next speaker was Prof. Dr. med. Hermann Rösch, and his title was "Ethics in the library – a matter of course?" And Nikolaus Hamann's talk was titled, "Never Be Silent! Ethical Aspects of Progressive Library Work." For information on the *Matura* diploma project this year, please see the beginning of the Austria section above.

2016

KRIBIBI's annual conference theme was "Poverty and Libraries – A Challenge." The gap between rich and poor is growing steadily in Austria, and poverty is increasing. The keynote speaker was Christine Stelzer-Orthofer, University of Linz, and her topic was, "The Fight Against Poverty or the Fight Against the Poor." The other speakers were Ms. Mag. Elisabeth Kapferer, Center for Ethics and Poverty Research of the University of Salzburg who spoke on "What Does Life Cost?" and Karsten Schuldt, Institute for Information Science in Chur, Switzerland, who spoke on the question, "What Should People in Poverty Actually DO in the Library?" There was also a panel discussion with representatives from the Catholic Social Academy, the Austrian Poverty Conference as well as the SPÖ, Green and Neos (New Austria and Liberal Forum) political parties. Although the Communist Party of Austria was invited, it appears that their representative did not turn up.

2017

KRIBIBI's annual conference theme was "Austrian Librarianship Compared to International Best Practice Examples." There were three speakers at the main program. Stanislav Bahor, National and University Library Ljubljana gave a talk on "Slovenian Librarianship," Marion Götz (FH-Bibliothek Wiener Neustadt) spoke on "The Merger Project of the of FH-Bibliothek and Stadtbücherei in Wiener Neustadt [Austria]," and Nikolaus Hamann spoke on "Yes, We Can: Austria's Library System Compared to International Best Practice Examples." He analyzed the examples in ten countries that have unified library laws and library codes of ethics. The countries were Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Romania, South Korea, Sweden, and Trinidad & Tobago. There were also two more speakers on another topic. Sabine Aigner and Helmut Alexander Schlatzer from the "Theater Baum/Schere – Bibliothek der Sinne" talked about their work with this provocative performance group.

The inaugural meeting of the new KRIBIBI was held on the first night of the annual conference on November 3rd with eleven members. Instead of a "working group," it became an "association," or non-profit organization, the Association of Critical Librarians. Statutes were adopted. Nikolaus Hamann was elected chair, Ulrike Retschizegger was elected treasurer, and Gina Jank was elected secretary. The three officers constitute the board, and they held their first board meeting on November 12th. The main topic was how to organize a "Parliamentary Citizens' Initiative" to establish a law for an Austrian library system. The

hope was to organize in partnership with the other library organizations.²⁵ As of the end of the year, there were 33 personal and three institutional members from across the country.²⁶

United Kingdom, Information for Social Change (ISC)

“an activist organisation that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers...”

The above quote is at the top of the homepage of the ISC website, but unfortunately it no longer applies.²⁷ As I noted in my book, besides the commendable continued publication of the ISC journal, also titled, *Information for Social Change*, there has been very little activity since 2013. One may register on the website, but it seems that there is no actual membership. Of all of the Statements & Petitions on the website, only one is from 2013, and the rest come from earlier days. Of the fifty or so Occasional Papers on the website, only three are from 2014 to 2016, and these are just very short comments which are also listed as blog posts. Altogether there are about thirty blog posts, about two-thirds of them are from 2013. Several of the more recent posts are announcements, and there is little here of much substance. The 2013 posts are mostly book announcements, non-ISC meeting announcements, short issue comments, and a video of John Pateman’s talk at the Edmonton Public Library, titled “Relationships: The Heart of a Community-Led Library Service.” One announcement is a call for a proposed ISC conference in 2015 in Liverpool, but it does not appear that this ever happened.

There have been four journal issues since 2013, and there is an announcement for a forthcoming issue in Summer 2017, which has not yet appeared. One of these four issues had a theme and three did not. The theme for no. 33 (Winter 2013/14) was “Recent Developments in Public Services for Young People,” edited by Martyn Lowe and Paul Catherall. The theme for the forthcoming issue is “Marx Meets Maslow: The Needs Based Public Library,” edited by John Pateman and Joe Pateman. The editors for no. 34 (Summer/Autumn 2014) and no. 35 (Summer 2015) were Martyn Lowe and Paul Catherall. The editors for no. 36 (Summer 2016) were John Pateman and Ken Williment (Canada). Besides the issue concentrating on services to young people, the topic that was given almost equal attention was LIS education.

The editorial board is much the same as in the past, and is composed of eight people, five of whom are English (one now working in Canada, John Pateman), with one Canadian, one Norwegian, and one from Finland. All the five issues described above are edited by board members. It is interesting that the two Scandinavians did not edit any of these issues (Mikael Böök from Finland and Anders Ericson from Norway). The other English board member is John Vincent.

As in the past, the website provides links to the books of six prominent ISC affiliated activists, three of whom are on the editorial board.

To summarize, ISC is doing important work by providing a journal to advocate for progressive librarianship, however at this point it is hard to envision it as an organization.

Rather it might be better characterized as a journal with a website and blog.

United States, Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association (SRRT)

As SRRT'sⁱ representative on the ALA Council, the governing body of the association from 1999 to 2009, and again from 2011 to 2015, this author played a major role in many of the activities described in this report. As SRRT Councilor, this author wrote the first draft of many of the resolutions described below, especially those concerning international topics and whistleblowing. The SRRT Councilor is automatically a member of the SRRT Action Council, its governing body. This author continued on the Action Council after his term as SRRT Councilor ended, and he is currently chair of the SRRT Membership Committee and chair of the SRRT International Responsibilities Task Force.

Of all the organizations described in this update article, the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) is currently the most active, and it is growing fast. It has had a significant effect on its parent body, the American Library Association (ALA), and therefore the profession. During this period, SRRT has presented many important programs attended by over two thousand librarians, and it has changed ALA policies through its resolutions in the ALA Council. In turn, these resolutions have sometimes had an effect on national debates, including through the ALA Washington Office, ALA's lobbying mechanism.

Its major activities have been initiated in its four task forces and approved in its governing body, the SRRT Action Council.²⁸ SRRT meets twice per year at the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting and ALA Annual Conference in various cities. The current task forces are: Feminist; Hunger, Homeless, and Poverty; International Responsibilities; and Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force. The task forces hold programs and do projects, as well as initiate resolutions that are voted in the Action Council. In recent years, the resolutions have been designed to be debated and passed in the ALA Membership Meetings and ALA Council, and therefore become ALA policy.²⁹ ALA policy serves as guidelines for local, state, and regional libraries, LIS schools, and other library organizations. And it also serves as the basis for lobbying Congress through the ALA Washington Office, as well as lobbying by state associations in their respective legislatures. Unfortunately, even when ALA Council approves a SRRT resolution, the ALA Washington Office will often not do more than issue a press release to advance this policy, and this has been particularly true for international issues. The Washington Office has had a mind of its own, and it has often intervened in policy debates behind the scenes at ALA meetings and conferences. The Office has pushed mainstream non-controversial issues and library funding while tending to ignore the successful more controversial SRRT resolutions. The Office has shied away from anything that they think might impact their effectiveness on bread and butter concerns. However, during this period, the Office could not ignore ALA new policies around racism, mass surveillance, and revelations from whistleblowers. With the retirement of the long-time director of the Office, and the retirement of the ALA Executive Director in

ⁱ See list of acronyms at the end of this section.

2017, we will have to see if SRRT can get any more traction with new ALA officials in place.

As reported in my book,³⁰ SRRT's charter membership in 1969 was 1050, making it ALA's largest round table. At its peak, membership was 2421 in 2007. But there was a drastic decline when the Action Council briefly changed its free student membership policy to a nominal fee. At the same time, there was a major mix-up when all members were automatically subscribed to the SRRT discussion list. The contentious discussion at that time led more members to drop off. By 2013, SRRT was the seventh largest round table with 861 members. The low point was 785 in 2014. At that time, the Action Council revived the SRRT Membership Committee, and with the help of the ALA Office for Library Outreach Services, the committee began a major outreach effort. All new members now get a welcome message inviting various kinds of participation, and all dropped members get a message noting SRRT's accomplishments and asking for reconsideration. The Committee also did outreach to all the ALA student chapters. In this way, the membership started growing by at least 20% per year, and by the end of 2017, SRRT membership was 1576, making it ALA's third largest round table and fastest growing large round table. Trump's election may have also spurred membership growth. The rate of increase for 2017 was an amazing 46.74%, and SRRT became ALA's largest round table by the end of March 2018 with 1785 members.

SRRT programs at ALA conferences are normally sponsored by the SRRT Task Forces, sometimes in partnership with other ALA units or sometimes non-ALA organizations. Over the period 2013–17, the SRRT task forces presented 25 programs, including speakers, panel discussions and films. These are all described below in the section on task forces. The Feminist Task Force had nine programs: annual film showings and three panels and a discussion. The International Responsibilities Task Force had seven programs: three film showings, two big name speakers (Glenn Greenwald and Bill McKibben), and two panels.³¹ The Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force had six programs: its annual Sunrise Celebrations and one panel. And the Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force had three panels.

During this period, SRRT worked on five major sets of issues that it brought to the ALA Council in order to create new policies for the profession, and to have an impact on wider national debates. These were: support for whistleblowers, opposition to mass surveillance, divestment of the ALA Endowment Fund of fossil fuel corporations, divestment of corporations in the West Bank and protection of schools and libraries in Gaza, and anti-racism and gun violence.

SRRT resolutions³² are often developed from SRRT programs. Over this period, SRRT introduced 13 resolutions in the ALA Council. Four were passed, three were greatly weakened by substitutions, two were greatly weakened by amendment, one was withdrawn, and three were defeated. There was success on two anti-racism resolutions and on advocating change of the "Illegal Aliens" subject heading to "Undocumented Immigrants," success after a Council working group process on mass surveillance, limited progress on three resolutions in support of whistleblowers with approval of general principles but not defense of specific people, limited progress on two anti-gun violence and safe space

resolutions, and no progress on divestment of the ALA Endowment from the West Bank, divestment of fossil fuels, and against Israeli attacks on schools and libraries in Gaza. Only 31% of SRRT resolutions were passed in their original form, or perhaps it is better to state that SRRT succeeded 31% of time. The resolutions are as follows:

- 2013. Support for whistleblowers Chelsea Manning³³ and John Kiriakou (failed and substitute passed), Support for Edward Snowden (failed and substitute passed), Divestment of fossil fuels from ALA Endowment (failed).
- 2014. Support for whistleblower Edward Snowden (failed and substitutes passed).
- 2015. Divestment from Endowment Fund of Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions because of their investments in the West Bank (withdrawn), Destruction of Schools and Libraries in Gaza (failed), Systematic Racism (passed), Movement for Black Lives statement (passed), gun violence (passed drastically amended), Mass surveillance (referred to working group), Revised destruction of Schools and Libraries in Gaza (failed).
- 2016. Revised mass surveillance (passed), Change of “Illegal Aliens” subject heading (passed).
- 2017. Revised gun violence (drastically weakened and passed).

SRRT's Five Major Issues

Support for Whistleblowers

SRRT's efforts in trying to get the Council to support specific whistleblowers have so far come to nothing. As described in my book,³⁴ the SRRT International Responsibilities Task Force with the support of the SRRT Action Council began working on support for whistleblowers at Midwinter 2011. SRRT continued on this track for four years, finally finishing at Midwinter 2014. SRRT presented two resolutions to the ALA Council at the 2011 Midwinter Meeting, the first protested federal agencies blocking access to the WikiLeaks website on public computer stations, and the second was in support of WikiLeaks and Julian Assange. Both were tabled without discussion to the annual conference. To bolster its position, SRRT (with many co-sponsors) brought Daniel Ellsberg to speak and show his film, *The Most Dangerous Man in America*, at the annual conference. Although thousands of enthusiastic librarians attended both his talk and film showing, the ALA Council defeated both SRRT resolutions. SRRT followed up with another two resolutions and a very well-attended talk by National Security Agency (NSA) whistleblower William Binney³⁵ (with two other speakers) at the 2012 Annual Conference. But the ALA Council again defeated SRRT's resolutions, the first in support of Chelsea Manning, and the second in support of WikiLeaks as an organization (and this time leaving out explicit support for Julian Assange).

For Midwinter 2013, SRRT reworked the whistleblower resolution to name both Manning and John Kiriakou and all whistleblowers. But things went badly and the ALA Council again

rejected the resolution. Some councilors even accused Manning of treason. But by the annual ALA conference of 2013, US public opinion had transformed from perhaps half the population believing federal government scare tactics and denouncing of whistleblowers to overwhelming support for Edward Snowden and his mass surveillance revelations. As a result, a new resolution in support of Snowden sailed through both the ALA Membership Meeting and the first meeting of the ALA Council. But the ALA Committee on Legislation and the Intellectual Freedom Committee were upset, and they moved reconsideration from the second to the third meeting of the Council. Another resolution on Manning was also referred to these two committees. The ALA Washington Office worked with the two Council committees to bring back a substitute resolution at the third meeting of the Council, which commended whistleblowers but stripped out names of specific whistleblowers in favor of broad policy statements. The ALA establishment was afraid that the Snowden resolution would have “unintended consequences,” that is, make it harder for ALA to get its usual noncontroversial library funding bills through Congress.

At Midwinter 2014, SRRT’s updated resolution in support of Edward Snowden was again subverted by the introduction and passage of two substitute resolutions. In a rancorous debate, the Council passed general resolutions on curbing surveillance and restoring civil liberties, and also expanding whistleblower protections including support for the pending USA FREEDOM Act. Of course, these were of no use in supporting a specific whistleblower who needed all the help he could get at the time, Edward Snowden, but it was perhaps a partial victory.

Opposition to Mass Surveillance

At the 2015 Annual Conference, SRRT’s mass surveillance resolution was initially hotly debated, but was finally referred back again to the Committee on Legislation and the Intellectual Freedom Committee. The two committees brought back a substitute motion at the third Council meeting. It reversed the intent of SRRT’s resolution by commending the passage of the USA FREEDOM Act, while stripping out all the specific provisions in the original resolution. SRRT had addressed all the amendments that were excluded from the final weakened USA FREEDOM Act, as well as mass surveillance provisions of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and Executive Order 12333 on US Intelligence Activities. When the substitute was approved, several counselors tried to amend it by adding back all the original resolved clauses. For a time, it actually looked like SRRT would win its case, but a last-minute referral back to the same committees ended the debate. The referral was made on the grounds that there were inaccuracies in the text, but this was a vague assertion without any specific content. After the conference, SRRT got a commitment that it would be involved in the joint committee’s discussions.

After intense debate, the Mass Surveillance Working Group came back with a strong amended resolution that was passed by the ALA Council at Midwinter 2016. Laura Koltutsky and this author represented SRRT on the working group and were pleased with the result.

Divestment of Fossil Fuel Investments from the ALA Endowment Fund

At Midwinter 2013, SRRT also tried to get its resolution on divestment of fossil fuel

holdings from the ALA Endowment through the ALA Council, but it was declared out of order and not considered on a technicality. Because of fiscal impact, the resolution was supposed to be reviewed by the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC). It was alleged that it was never sent to them, but that was patently untrue. The resolution then came back to the 2013 Annual ALA Conference, but it was defeated by two votes at the ALA Membership Meeting, and was soundly defeated at the ALA Council.

In a related matter at annual 2017, the Action Council endorsed SRRT activist Fred Stoss' successful Council resolution recognizing that climate change is real and caused by humans, and that libraries need to actively address the situation.

SRRT has hosted several task forces that later become round tables. The SRRT Task Force on Environment was reconstructed as the Sustainability Round Table and approved by the ALA Council in 2013. SRRT has forged a close relationship with this newest round table, and is jointly working on a socially responsible investment resolution during 2018.

Divestment from the Occupied Territories and Destruction of Libraries and Schools in Gaza

The ALA Endowment Fund includes investments in corporations doing business in the West Bank. By their presence, they are collaborating with Israel's occupation and repression of the population. SRRT noted three major corporations in the Endowment Fund that are involved in the West Bank. But SRRT's Midwinter 2015 Resolution on ALA Divestment from Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions had to be withdrawn because ALA no longer invests in individual stocks, but rather various kinds of mutual and other funds through investment portfolios. SRRT then asked for specific information on how the Endowment Fund is structured.

SRRT's 2014 Resolution on the Destruction of Libraries and Schools in Gaza became the most contentious item on the Council's agenda at the 2015 Midwinter Meeting in Chicago. The resolution noted that ALA Council had approved similar resolutions after the Israeli bombing of Gaza in 2002 and 2009. (Both of those resolutions were drafted by SRRT but weakened by amendments from the IRC.) This new resolution detailed neither the damage to or the complete destruction of about 270 libraries and 399 schools and kindergartens. Further, it explained that many of these UN schools were being used to house displaced families, and although the UN gave the locations numerous times to the Israeli military, they were still heavily bombed, killing and severely injuring many civilians. The resolution was decisively defeated at Midwinter, and a revised Gaza resolution was overwhelmingly defeated again at the 2015 Annual Conference in San Francisco.

A propaganda campaign against the resolution began as soon as we posted the resolution to the SRRT listserv just before the beginning of the 2015 Midwinter Meeting (January 27 to February 5). I received a call on January 27th from someone who said they were representing the "Jewish Library Association," perhaps they meant the Association of Jewish Libraries. This turned out to be from someone at BLS Web Strategies. That company's website hosts the newsletter of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania.³⁶ The person who phoned me was obviously angry, and the caller tried to interrogate me about why we had written the resolution and asked that we withdraw it. An organization named Librarians for

Fairness posted a message to its blog on January 29th in opposition to our efforts.³⁷ Librarians for Fairness' stated mission is to "...ensure that Israel's viewpoint is represented fairly..."³⁸ In a post titled "Antisemitism at ALA Midwinter, blogger Dan Kleinman of the SafeLibraries blog personally attacked this author, even including my photo with the caption "AntiSemite Al Kagan."³⁹

During the period from January 23 to February 3, 2015, I personally received messages from 21 individuals castigating me and SRRT for submitting the resolution. And many of these messages were more widely distributed. Some of these messages included charges of antisemitism. There were messages from two members of the Association of Jewish Librarians, one being from Joyce Levine, their Publications Chair. Oren Weinberg, Executive Director of the National Library of Israel also weighed in. Many of the other messages were from librarians who worked at various Jewish temples and schools, as well as curators of Jewish collections. Please note that few of these responders were people who had any relationship to SRRT or ALA Governance, and some of them had obviously not even read the proposed resolution.

In advocating the resolution on the Council floor, I noted that I was a member of Jewish Voice for Peace and another Israeli peace organization, B'Tselem. This seemed to have no effect on the debate.

Anti-Racism and Gun Violence

In spring 2014, ALA President Barbara Stripling established the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, after much criticism of ALA for scheduling the 2016 Annual Conference in Florida (Orlando). Florida had recently passed its "Stand Your Ground" law, which resulted in the killing of Trayvon Martin, an African American young person who was targeted for "walking while black." His killer was found innocent by the standards set out in the Stand Your Ground law. The task force was asked to "...develop a plan and strategic actions to build more equity, diversity, and inclusion among our members, the field of librarianship, and our communities." Its final report of June 2016 provided sixty recommendations.⁴⁰ An ongoing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Implementation Working Group was then established. LaJuan Pringle represented SRRT on the task force, and he is also on the Working Group (although not officially as SRRT representative). In addition, there were several SRRT members and allies on the task force, and the same is true for the implementation group.

At Midwinter 2015, SRRT proposed an amendment and endorsed that version of the joint IFC and IRC Resolution Denouncing Recent Assaults on the Freedom of Expression as Exemplified in the Attack on *Charlie Hebdo*. The amendment would have made clear that in addition to denouncing the attack, SRRT was also opposed to speech that vilifies an ethnic or religious group. This was based on *Charlie Hebdo's* clear anti-Muslim orientation over the last years. But SRRT did not press the point after the resolution was reworked.

The shooting of Michael Brown, a young African American, in Ferguson, Missouri, in November 2014, provoked major protests and police violence. In the chaos after the shooting, the Ferguson Municipal Public Library stayed open and provided a safe space and needed resources for the traumatized community. The Action Council endorsed a tribute to

the Ferguson Municipal Public Library for its community involvement in a time of crisis.

At the 2015 Annual Conference in San Francisco, SRRT won a resolution denouncing systemic racism, and amazingly another endorsing the Movement for Black Lives statement. And SRRT endorsed a successful resolution on improving access to Spanish, bilingual, and books in various languages for children in detention centers.

SRRT succeeded in passing its Midwinter 2016 resolution on advocating the change of the Library of Congress Subject Heading “Illegal Aliens” to “Undocumented Immigrants.” As a follow-up at Annual 2016, The SRRT Action Council endorsed an ALCTS resolution in support of the Library of Congress’ process in revising subject headings. Unfortunately the US Congress intervened to quash the change. It was the first time Congress had intervened on a subject heading.

SRRT’s 2015 Annual Conference resolution on gun violence was defeated in a close vote at the ALA Membership Meeting, and then significantly revised before being passed by the ALA Council. Since the Council would not condemn gun violence in general, SRRT narrowed it to only gun violence that affects libraries, and the prohibition of carrying of guns near or in libraries and educational institutions. But even that was too broad for the Council, and it was finally amended to just supporting legislation that allows the prohibition of carrying of guns near or in libraries and educational institutions.

In the wake of continuous gun violence against African American communities, another resolution against gun violence was proposed by the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. It brought back many of the resolved clauses in the original SRRT resolution of 2015. There was again resistance by the Intellectual Freedom Committee and the Committee on Legislation, and it was therefore referred to a new working group to be considered again at Midwinter 2017. The revised resolution on gun violence was adopted at Midwinter 2017 without addressing most of SRRT’s original concerns. In response, a resolution on “Libraries as Responsible Spaces” was introduced and adopted at annual, but some Action Council members were still not happy that many of SRRT’s concerns were again missing.

Other SRRT Actions

SRRT campaigned against an ALA dues resolution at the 2013 Midwinter meeting. SRRT had been on record for some time in favor of a progressive dues structure based on income, but this new plan kept the same structure, and it automatically raises dues according to the Consumer Price Index. As a compromise, it was approved for a trial five-year period.

Many SRRT members were sad to note the passing of early SRRT activist Zoia Horn, remembered for her opposition to the Viet Nam War, and willingness to go to jail for twenty days when she refused to testify against the Berrigan brothers. The Council unanimously approved SRRT’s Memorial Resolution at the 2015 Annual Conference.⁴¹

At Annual 2015, SRRT signed a Solidarity Statement Concerning Police Spies in the United Kingdom. This came to the round table from Martin Lowe, an editor of *Information for*

Social Change in England. Martin Lowe had personal experience of a police spy infiltrating a progressive organization in London.

At the 2016 Annual Conference, SRRT Action Council urged ALA to apply for a grant to hire a homelessness educator, and more financial support for the Spectrum Scholarships which are aimed at creating a more diverse profession.

And at the 2016 Annual Conference, the Action Council voiced disapproval of any partnership between ALA and Walmart because of that corporation's poor working conditions, salary, and benefits.

SRRT Endorsements of Other Issues

ALA Internal Policies

At the 2013 Annual Conference, SRRT endorsed a resolution against prayers at ALA meetings.

At Midwinter 2017, SRRT opposed the resolution that would eliminate the requirement for the ALA Executive Director to have an MLS or other library science degree, but the Council voted in favor of the resolution. This came up because of the impending retirement of the ALA Executive director, Keith Fiels. Interestingly, Fiels himself was against the change. However, this issue is ongoing as of this writing since a successful membership petition to revisit the requirement put the question on the spring 2018 membership ballot. The vote was 6515 to 3890 in favor of retaining the library degree requirement. However, in order to overturn a Council resolution 25% of ALA individual members must vote. Unfortunately the vote totaled only 20.79%, and was therefore not sufficient to overturn the policy. In response, a resolution has been introduced to revisit the issue at the June 2018 annual conference Membership Meeting in New Orleans. Accordingly, the search for a new Executive Director has been put on hold until the issue is settled.

Government Documents

At the 2013 Annual Conference, SRRT went on record in opposition to “destructive digitization” of government documents, that is, tearing them apart in the process of digitization. At the 2014 Annual Conference, SRRT supported a resolution intended to stop this practice. And at annual 2017, SRRT endorsed a GODORT resolution in support of federal funding to preserve government documents.

At Annual 2016, SRRT endorsed an IRC resolution urging restoration of the United Nations Depository Library System.

Human Rights

At Midwinter 2015, SRRT endorsed GLBTRT's Resolution on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), but that resolution was not in the Committee on Legislation's report and surprisingly never came to the floor.

Additionally, SRRT endorsed a 2015 tribute recognizing the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).⁴²

District of Columbia Services

At the 2014 Annual Conference, SRRT supported a resolution that asked Congress to give the District of Columbia power to maintain city services during a government shutdown.

SRRT Task Forces

Feminist Task Force

The task force's Amelia Bloomer Project's annual list of notable feminist literature for people from birth to eighteen years old has been published since 2001. The Feminist Task Force (FTF) began a joint project in 2008 with GLBTRT to publish an annual GLBT bibliography for young readers, called the Rainbow Project. The very successful project was transferred entirely to GLBTRT in January 2015. The FTF newsletter is titled, *Women in Libraries*. Their ongoing Women of Library History project profiles trailblazing women in the profession. They also hold Feminist Night Out at the Movies at annual conferences. Every third year, it is the task force's turn to organize the Introduction to Women's Issues discussion group. The 2013 discussion was around gaming, and in 2016 it was on telling stories about your workplace. Their 2016 program was "Dismantling the Master's Bookshelves: Feminism for Libraries in the Real World." And the 2017 program featured Kelly Jensen, former librarian and editor of the new young adult book, *Here We Are: Feminism for the Real World*. They also moderated a panel with writers Mikki Kendall, Erika L. Sanchez and Brandy Colbert, and librarian Jessica Pryde.

The most prominent task force members at Action Council meetings were: Diedre Conkling, Sherre Harrington, and Theresa Tobin. However, it is quite clear that there are many other activists involved at various levels including the newsletter editors, Dolores Fidishun, Jane Cothron, and Mary Jinglewski, and the Amelia Bloomer co-chairs, Lizz Zitron and Katelyn Browne.

Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty Task Force

In 2013, the task force published a toolkit in coordination with the ALA Office for Diversity and Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) titled, *Extending Our Reach: Reducing Homelessness Through Library Engagement*, and held a webinar and panel discussion to promote it. They also had two panel discussions that year on ALA's focus on "Transforming Our Libraries, Ourselves." The task force also had a panel discussion on creating a Human Library, that is, people from various backgrounds and cultures make themselves available to talk about their lives and perspectives. In 2015, the task force successfully partnered with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force in a book drive with the San Francisco Public Library and five local organizations for homeless shelters and transitional housing. And the task force partnered with the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services as well as the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) and Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) to feature a new film about

homeless youth, *The Homestretch*. The most prominent task force members have been Lisa Giekes and Julie Winkelstein.

International Responsibilities Task Force

A resolution in support of Chelsea Manning, John Kiriakou and all whistleblowers failed in 2013, and support for Edward Snowden failed in 2014. Instead the Council passed resolutions upholding the principle of whistleblowing, but it would not support any specific whistleblowers.

Divestment of the ALA Endowment Fund of fossil fuels stocks failed in 2013. The task force's 2013 program was entitled *Returning Fire: Culture Jamming, War, & Militarism in the Online Gaming Sphere*. This included showing the film *Returning Fire* and a provocative panel afterward that featured the film's director, Communications Professor Roger Stahl from the University of Georgia–Athens, as well as culture jammer and Digital Media/Fine Arts Professor at the University of Nevada–Reno, Joseph Delappe.

The task force's Resolution against the Israeli Destruction of Libraries and Schools in Gaza in 2014 became the most contentious item at the ALA Council at the Midwinter meeting, but it was soundly defeated. A revised similar resolution was defeated in 2015. A resolution for divestment of the ALA Endowment Fund from corporations doing business in the West Bank was withdrawn at Midwinter 2015 when SRRT realized that the fund was no longer investing in individual stocks, but rather various kinds of portfolios. SRRT then asked for more specific information on how the investments were structured.

The task force brought a resolution against mass surveillance to the ALA Council at the 2015 annual conference. It was hotly debated, but finally referred to a large working group representing the various parties including the ALA Legislation Committee, ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee, and SRRT. A strong resolution was finally passed at Midwinter 2016.

In an excellent program with perhaps 500 in attendance, the task force presented Glenn Greenwald by Skype from his home in Brazil. He talked about his book, *No Place to Hide*, his meetings with whistleblower Edward Snowden, and getting the story out about US mass surveillance. The task force also arranged to show Laura Poitras' excellent film, *Citizen Four*, at the 2015 annual conference in the "Now Showing" film series. It shows Edward Snowden's story of releasing the NSA documents. SRRT also arranged to show the film *The Great Book Robbery*, at the same ALA film series. This documentary explains how tens of thousands of Palestinian books and manuscripts were confiscated by the Israeli forces in 1948–49 and deposited in Israel's National Library, as well as the movement for repatriation.

In partnership with Librarians and Archivists for Palestine (LAP), the International Responsibilities Task Force presented a 2016 program on libraries in Palestine with Randa Kamal, President of the Palestinian Library Association, and Diana Sayej Naser, General Coordinator of the Palestinian Library and Information Consortium (PALICO). They also did a radio interview, and they were interviewed by Tom Twiss (IRTF) and Rachel Mattson (LAP) for an article in *Progressive Librarian*.⁴³ There was also an interview in *American Libraries*.⁴⁴ They addressed the severe challenges faced because of the Israeli occupation and requested material aid of books, free access to e-resources, exchange programs, and training

through webinars.

At the 2017 annual conference, in partnership with the Sustainability Round Table, APALA, and AILA, the task force had a hugely successful program with about 500 in attendance featuring Bill McKibben, acclaimed author, environmentalist, and activist. His topic was “Imagining a World That Works — In Time to Prevent a World That Doesn’t.” McKibben is co-founder and Senior Advisor at 350.org, an international, grassroots climate movement that works in 188 countries, and is credited with beginning the fossil fuel divestment movement. McKibben suggests that we see climate change as a threat on the order of World War III and respond accordingly.

The most prominent task force members were: Jane Glasby, Al Kagan, Mike Marlin, and Tom Twiss.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force

In coordination with the Black Caucus of ALA, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force continued to hold its usual wonderful Sunrise Celebration at each ALA Midwinter Meeting, very often on the day of the MLK holiday. Prominent speakers gave keynote addresses, often in connection with their new books. Representatives of the various ethnic library associations and caucuses and progressive round tables and ALA groups read from the writings of MLK, Jr., then a call to action, and finally joining hands to sing *We Shall Overcome*.

The 2013 theme, “Stride Toward Freedom,” was based on Dr. King’s book of the same title that highlights the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955–56. Dr. Jeanne Theoharis, Professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, used that year’s keynote to focus on the life of Rosa Parks, a key figure in the boycott. The 2014 program featured Georgetown University Professor of Law, Dr. Sheryll Cashin. She discussed examining social stratification as a key to overcoming discrimination. Cornel West gave a rousing talk on social justice in 2015. The 2016 program featured Dr. Mary Frances Berry who spoke of Dr. King’s influence, and she also discussed her involvement and arrest in the Free South Africa Movement. She also supported numerous causes including “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” and the Arab Spring. Her new book, *Five Dollars and a Pork Chop Sandwich: Vote Buying and the Corruption of Democracy* was recently published by Beacon Press, a co-sponsor of the Sunrise Celebration. “Freedom Ain’t Never Been Free” was the theme of the 2017 program. Dr. Daina Ramey Berry spoke about her latest book, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*.

In coordination with the Black Caucus, the task force had a 2013 video program titled, “Librarians and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: His Words and Our Lives.” The task force’s project in producing video tributes to MLK, Jr. is on-going, as is their participation in the Diversity and Outreach Fair.

The most prominent task force members at Action Council meetings were: Mary Biblo, Ginny Moore, LaJuan Pringle and Julie Winkelstein.

Acronyms

AILA. American Indian Library Association

ALCTS. Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALA)

APALA. Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association

FTF. Feminist Task Force (SRRT)

GLBTRT. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (ALA)

GODORT. Government Documents Round Table (ALA)

HHPTF. Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force (SRRT)

IFC. Intellectual Freedom Committee (ALA Council)

IRC. International Relations Committee (ALA Council)

IRTF. International Responsibilities Task Force (SRRT)

MLK, Jr. HTF. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Task Force (SRRT)

ODLOS. Office of Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ALA)

OLOS. Office of Library Outreach Services (combined into ODLOS)

YALSA. Young Adult Library Services Association (ALA)

United States, The Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG)⁴⁵

Elaine Harger, one of the founders of PLG and still the most active member, was interviewed by Rory Litwin, the founder of Library Juice Press, for the *Library Juice* blog in 2016.⁴⁶ In this very useful interview, both Litwin and Harger try to explicate the differences in orientation between the older generation who started and continue to work in PLG and a younger generation active on #critlib. Litwin characterizes PLG as socialist while #critlib is more concerned with the politics of identity, however he notes considerable overlap. Litwin states that in 1990 at the time of the birth of PLG, the way to network was to start an organization, but that is no longer true today. Harger replies that it is not quite that straightforward. She notes that while PLG is broadly socialist, it has always also been informed by the material conditions and voices of oppressed groups, and that the relatively new term “intersectionality” applies to PLG’s orientation. But Harger goes further. She argues that there is a difference in ultimate goals, and that changes in social structures cannot happen without organization, that successful movements for social change have always been powerfully organized. On the other hand, Internet groups such as #critlib do not need structured organizations because their main goal is to discuss what needs to be changed and develop their practice as librarians, not to seriously organize in order to change society. But Harger provides another important difference and gives credit to the younger #critlib folks for their welcoming manner of relating to one another and their explicit understanding of

white privilege. She agrees that aggressive interpersonal behavior has sometimes got in the way of PLG's work.

As opposed to its younger and more vital days, PLG is much less active than it was in the 1990s and 2000s, when it often actively worked with SRRT to jointly present programs and formulate resolutions at ALA meetings and conferences. PLG's journal, *Progressive Librarian: A Journal for Critical Studies & Progressive Politics in Librarianship*,⁴⁷ continues to be an impressive scholarly publication, and is the organization's most important activity. There is a listserv and the Union Library Workers blog. There was also a newsletter, *Progressive Librarians Guild Bulletin*, published March 2012 to March 2015.⁴⁸ PLG has 600 followers on Twitter, a 54% increase since 2015 when there were 390, and there were 458 on the PLG listserv as of the end of 2017.

PLG membership has fluctuated dramatically over the years. The highest membership point was in 2009 with 301 members, but it fell almost by half to 162 in 2011. By 2014 it was back up to 251, but as of July 2017, it was down to 173 members. As of the end of 2017, the membership is about 212.⁴⁹

Since 2013 PLG has approved nine position statements, mainly on surveillance and privacy rights, climate change, support for libraries and culture and peace in the Middle East, and workplace speech. PLG continues to give the Miriam Braverman Award each year for the best library school student paper. PLG holds an informational meeting at all ALA meetings, and the Award winners usually present their papers there. There is usually an informal dinner at ALA midwinter and annual conferences. Meeting and dinner attendance usually varies between about 10 and 25 persons, many of which may not be PLG members. As opposed to the past, PLG does not usually sponsor listed formal programs or panel discussions at ALA. The exception was in 2017 when there was a panel on "Deprofessionalization, Cutbacks, and Progressive Librarianship in the Trump Era." And there are still at least three active chapters at LIS schools in the United States (St. Kate's, Simmons, and University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign) and two in Canada (University of Western Ontario and University of British Columbia).

Progressive Librarian (PL) published five issues from 2013 to 2017. No. 43 (Winter 2014/2015) was a special issue with papers from the Edmonton PLG chapter's symposium on "Commodification of Information." During this time period, PL published 30 scholarly articles, eight conference papers, four editorials (mainly concerning ALA and PLG), four Braverman essays, six documents (mainly from ALA), seven reports (mainly annual library union reviews), and 14 book reviews. Neoliberalism explicitly framed eight of the articles, and it was the context for many of the others. PLG's international solidarity was represented by several articles and reports on Palestine and an article on Cuba. Various aspects of human rights were another underlying theme.

The Braverman Award papers were:⁵⁰ "Loud Hands in the Library: Neurodiversity in LIS Theory & Practice" by Emily Lawrence (2013), "Deconstructing the 'Books for Boys' Discourse" by Denise Scott (2014), "Intellectual Freedom Is Not Social Justice: The Symbolic Capital of Intellectual Freedom in ALA Accreditation and LIS Curricula" by Kyle Shockey (2015), "I'll Drown My Book: Visibility, Gender, and Classification in the University of Arizona Poetry Center Library" by Sarah S. Kortemeier (2016), and "Personal

Health Data, Surveillance, & Biopolitics: Toward a Personal Health Data Information Literacy” by Matthew Weirick Johnson (2017).

As noted above, PLG’s impact on the profession is probably significantly weaker than in past years when the founders and key activists met at ALA meetings twice per year. In that way, they were able to organize a vibrant organization that presented highly successful well-attended programs (often jointly with SRRT) with some of the most important thinkers of the times. Since most key movers of the coordinating committee and editorial board no longer attend ALA meetings and conferences, it is much harder to have a significant presence at ALA and to keep the organization running smoothly. It has become all too apparent that it is hard to run an organization through email, and recently, through conference calls and Skype.

In the past few years, the PLG Coordinating Committee (CC) has been involved in extensive discussions on how to revitalize the organization, increase membership, become more financially stable, better connect with students and chapters, better coordinate with Canadian members, and generally foster participation. But many of these discussions have gone in circles, and only some of the issues have been resolved.

The online *Progressive Librarians Guild Bulletin* was a useful communications tool for both national and chapter news from its inception in March 2012 to its demise in March 2015. In fact, much of the information presented here was easily compiled by referring to the *Bulletin*. The decision to incorporate it into the PLG blog was a mistake since the blog never caught on.

By 2015, the financial picture made it difficult to continue the printing and regular publication of *Progressive Librarian*. The policy is to make everything available online except for a six-month delay for the latest issue. Various strategies were discussed including making it an e-journal only. Several CC members noted that it is a much more engaging experience to sit down with a hard copy in-hand than to browse material online, and several on the CC are adamant that the journal must be printed for the sake of preservation. Some argued that going open access and totally online might actually make the financial situation worse because there would be no incentive to actually join the organization. A compromise possibility was to publish online issues and only a compilation in hard copy at the end of the year. There was also the issue of limiting the length of articles to reduce printing costs. Because it costs more to mail the journal to Canada, there was a discussion about charging more for Canadian members, or perhaps finding a way to mail from Canada. In the end, none of these changes were made.

PLG membership is administered through the good graces of David Lesniaski, an LIS faculty member at St. Catherine University. PLG purchased MemberPlanet software to facilitate administration and make it possible to join and renew membership online. It is likely that this has had some beneficial impact on the financial ability to continue publishing.

The Coordinating Committee discussed the need for Canadian representation, and a Canadian LIS student did join the CC, but only for a few months. The CC has gone around on chapter relations. It appears that many of the chapters are loosely organized, and since most of the members are LIS students, the leadership continually changes. Many chapters

have organized and then closed down rapidly. Chapters tend to focus on local concerns. It appears that many or most chapter members have not joined the national PLG, thus depriving the organization of needed revenue to make ends meet. Some chapter members have not even consulted the PLG website or seen a copy of *Progressive Librarian*.

PLG's most important strength is its journal, *Progressive Librarian*, but there are long gaps between issues. Today we also have the new online *Journal of Radical Librarianship* and the *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*. The PLG listserv and Twitter account are places of active discussion of issues not often debated in the mainstream library press. The organization has some presence at ALA conferences, but not nearly the impact that it used to have with highly attended programs and distinguished speakers. PLG provides an opportunity for interested students to form chapters to pursue their own interests, but unfortunately with little relationship to the coordinating committee. The Braverman Award provides an opportunity for an LIS student to publish a paper and \$500 of financial help to present it at the PLG meeting during an ALA conference. Since many of the original activists and current coordinating committee members no longer attend ALA meetings, it has been much harder to keep the organization running smoothly. For the past few years, contentious communication by email, conference calls, and Skype has resulted in a number of recent resignations from the coordinating committee and editorial board. PLG's impact today is primarily through its journal, with a supporting website, listserv, and presence on social media.

Highlights by Year⁵¹

2013

PLG started the year with an interesting discussion at ALA Midwinter in Seattle on "What does it mean to be a progressive librarian during times of economic and environmental crisis." Long time PLG activist, Peter McDonald made remarks and then opened the floor for discussion. In April, the PLG Coordinating Committee (CC) co-signed a letter to President Obama with 30 other organizations on the need to reform the Security Classification System.⁵² In June, the PLG CC co-signed a letter with 84 other organizations to US Congress expressing concern about secret spying by the National Security Agency (NSA) on phone records and Internet activity. This blanket sweep of records is an abuse of Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act.⁵³ At the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, PLG endorsed a SRRT resolution on fossil fuel divestment that had been defeated by just two votes at the ALA Membership Meeting the previous day.⁵⁴ Braverman Award winner, Emily Lawrence presented her paper by Skype during the ALA Annual Conference. In October, the CC declined to sign a joint letter produced by OpenTheGovernment.org on secret law and government surveillance because it was too weak. In October, a Japanese translation of the book, *Questioning Library Neutrality: Essays from Progressive Librarian*, edited by Alison Lewis (Library Juice Press), was published by the Kyoto University Graduate School of Education. In November, the CC endorsed the International Principle on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance.⁵⁵ Finally in December, the CC endorsed the letter organized by the National Coalition for History to James Clapper, Office of the

Director of National Intelligence, and signed by 15 other organizations. This protested Clapper's decision to cease providing information to the World News Connection database.⁵⁶

2014

PLG began the year with a discussion around "Libraries and Poverty," including ALA's Policy Statement "Library Services to the Poor" at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia. The PLG Braverman Award winner, Denise Scott, discussed her paper at the June ALA Annual Conference in Las Vegas. John Chrastka also spoke about his new organization, EveryLibrary, which focuses on campaigns to support public libraries. PLG endorsed a solidarity statement calling for an end to Israel's siege of Gaza.⁵⁷

2015

Responding to the destruction of libraries and antiquities in Iraq during March 2015, the PLG CC endorsed a statement "In Defense of Libraries and Culture in the Middle East."⁵⁸ There were 369 people on the PLG listserv as of May. PLG celebrated its 25th anniversary at a book signing and reception at the West Portal Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, in connection with the annual ALA conference. The event was set up by longtime PLG member Melissa Riley who works there. Tom Twiss and Al Kagan gave short presentations about their new books on Trotsky and progressive librarianship respectively. Braverman Award winner, Kyle Shockey, gave his presentation at the PLG meeting in San Francisco. Michael Matthews (a CC member) set up a PLG Twitter account in mid-year and a new blog at year's end.

2016

Braverman Award winner Sarah S. Kortemeier gave her presentation at the PLG meeting during the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando.

2017

A small group of PLG members participated in the Atlanta March for Social Justice and Women the day after Trump was sworn in as President. This happened during ALA Midwinter, and was in coordination with a campaign of nationally organized marches all over the country that day. The CC published an open letter in support of librarian Lesley Williams to the Evanston Public Library Board and Director (Evanston is just outside of Chicago.) It concerned the case of African-American librarian Lesley Williams who was suspended (and later forced to resign) over her advocacy for the local African-American community, a more equitable distribution of library resources, and for scheduling a talk by Ali Abunimah, the author of the Electronic Intifada website.⁵⁹ Although Abunimah's talk in support of Palestinian rights was not mentioned in the CC's letter, this appears to be the final action that led to Williams' ouster. The library director cancelled the talk after getting pressure from unknown individuals. After much community outcry, and behind the scenes help from the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom, the talk was rescheduled, and it was attended by an overflow crowd without incident.

At the Chicago annual ALA conference this year, PLG presented "Deprofessionalization, Cutbacks, and Progressive Librarianship in the Trump Era." Chaired by Jane Glasby, the

speakers and topics were Peter McDonald, Dean of Library Services, Fresno State, “Manifest Destiny, the Morrill Act, and Maker-Spaces: Academic Libraries in the Service of Capital;” Mark Hudson, Head of Adult Services, Monroeville Public Library (PA), “Community-Building vs. Customer-Driven Librarianship: Countering Neoliberal Ideology in Public Libraries;” John Buschman, Dean of University Libraries, Seton Hall University, “November 8, 2016, the Public, and Libraries;” and Maura Seale, Collections, Research, and Instruction Librarian, Georgetown University, “Efficiency or Jagged Edges: Resisting Neoliberal Logics of Assessment.” McDonald, Hudson, and Buschman are longtime prominent PLG members.⁶⁰ The PLG website was also revamped and PLG blogs in English (again) and Spanish were launched this year. In October, the PLG CC issued a statement opposing the Department of Homeland Security’s attack on privacy rights.⁶¹

PLG Chapters (active anytime during 2013–17)

Edmonton, Alberta

In April 2013, the chapter sent a letter to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, James Moore, concerning violations of its Code of Conduct by Daniel Caron, Librarian and Archivist of Canada, and Mark C. Melanson, Champion, Values and Ethics. In October, they held their third annual symposium. The topic was “Precarious Labour.”⁶² Their fourth annual symposium was held in October 2014 with the topic “Commodification of Information,” and the conference papers were published in *Progressive Librarian* no. 43 (Winter 2014/2015). Their fifth symposium was held in coordination with the PLG Calgary chapter in February 2016, and the topic was “Gender and Sexuality in the Information Professions.” As a result of PLG CC outreach to the Canadian chapters, the chapter’s communications officer joined the PLG CC., but their representative did not participate in the CC discussions. Out of the blue, on May 31, the chapter notified the CC that it intended to dissolve at its June 28 meeting citing various grievances, some of which were clearly mistaken, such as not being informed of a proposed dues increase, lack of communication, and chaotic delivery of the journal. Clearly the chapter’s representative on the CC could have intervened on all these issues but instead remained silent. Perhaps more importantly, they also stated that they needed an organization familiar with the Canadian context, and that would explicitly address Canadian issues. The PLG CC responded for the record that communication was a two-way process and that all of their concerns could have been brought to the CC’s attention by their representative. However, the CC wished their proposed new organization well. The chapter dissolved on June 28, 2016.⁶³

St. Kate’s University, St. Paul and Minneapolis⁶⁴

The official name is St. Catherine University, but the chapter is known as St. Kate’s. The chapter participated in two Minnesota AIDS Walks in May 2013 and May 2015. In March 2016, they cataloged 74 titles at the East Side Freedom Library at a PLG/SAA Cataloging Pizza Party. Finally, they participated in Banned Books Week, September of 2017.

Simmons College, Boston⁶⁵

In March 2013, the chapter organized a book drive to support the Prison Book Program in Quincy, MA. In 2014, they joined in a series of SLIS talks and events on race and racism.

They held a Privacy and Surveillance for Libraries Workshop in January 2015. There is no information after 2015.

Toronto, Ontario

At the beginning of 2014, the chapter won the Les Fowlie Intellectual Freedom Award at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference. It was given for their work documenting the case of Dale Askey, a librarian at McMaster University who was sued by the Edwin Mellen Press for his criticism of their scholarship. Askey won the Advancement of Intellectual Freedom in Canada Award that year, presented by the Canadian Library Association, and Mellen eventually dropped the suit. There is no information after 2014.

University of British Columbia, Vancouver

In April 2017, the PLG CC responded to an anonymous petition hosted on Change.org titled, "Protect Feminist Books at Vancouver Women's Library." The petition claimed that the chapter and national organization condoned censorship of materials at the Vancouver Women's Library. Evidently the dispute involved collection assessment focusing on transgender issues, and a demand to remove twenty books or more from the library.⁶⁶ PLG denied taking either side in this conflict.

University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign

The chapter held a zine-making workshop in April 2013 and a talk by Trudy Huskamp Peterson on "The Role of Archives in Strengthening Democracy." In May, they partnered with two other groups to screen the documentary *Miss Representation*, a film about the portrayal of women in the media. Al Kagan presented a brief history of the Progressive Librarians Guild and its relationship to the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table on October 29, 2013.⁶⁷ The chapter volunteered at the local Books2Prisoners project in October 2014. Al Kagan gave another brief talk on PLG and SRRT in October 2016. There were 17 students at the November 2017 meeting.

University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario⁶⁸

In January 2013, PLG members spoke at the City Council meeting to defend the library budget, and they helped to unfreeze it. In February, they issued a statement in support of the free speech of Associate University Librarian Dale Askey and his employer, McMaster University. Edwin Mellen Press brought a suit alleging libel and defamation for his comments about the quality of the press's publications. From May to July, they intensified their campaign to end the agreement between the University of Western Ontario and Access Copyright, which was accomplished that December. In June, the chapter joined the efforts of the Edmonton chapter to demand the appointment of a Librarian and Archivist of Canada who would cultivate dialogue with communities. They also created a subject guide for resources concerning the LGBT community and marched in the local Pride Parade. In

August they collected 78 pounds of food for the London Food Bank. In October, several members of the chapter critiqued LIS education at a graduate student conference. In November, they recommended that colleges and universities reject the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (now Universities Canada) guidelines for fair dealing (i.e. fair use), and instead consider adoption of the Canadian Association of University Teachers guidelines. In February 2014, they protested the closing of federal departmental and science libraries, and the chapter called on the government of Canada to reinstate funding to Library and Archives Canada. They criticized the new strategic plans for the University of Western Ontario and the University of Saskatchewan, and the firing of Saskatchewan Professor Robert Buckingham for his letter in this regard. They sponsored a Copyright Awareness Roundtable in July 2014. In March 2015, they proclaimed their solidarity with the Toronto PLG, and protested their iSchool's scheduling a talk on "Radical Librarians" behind a union picket line. In May 2016, the chapter sent their solidarity to the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, and they demanded a return of funding for 54 provincial libraries. In November, they partnered with the Graduate Resource Center for a human library event. And in July 2017, they held an Art + Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon.

Appendix: Names of Interviewees

Barbro Bolonassos, Longtime BiS Activist (Stockholm)

Lena Lundgren, BiS Board Member (Stockholm)

Nikolaus Hamann, Chair, KRIBIBI (Vienna)

Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen, De Facto Chair, Kritische Bibliothek (Berlin)

Acknowledgements

The author would like to especially thank the 2017 interviewees for their generosity and solidarity.

Corrections to *Progressive Library Organizations: A Worldwide History*

Page 181, SRRT chapter, under Civil Rights, last paragraph, name should be Mitch Freedman.

Page 195, Intellectual Freedom and Access to Information, 1st paragraph, should be Freedman.

Page 283, Appendix: Interviewees. Under KRIBIBI, name should be Christian Jahl.

- 1 Alfred Kagan, *Progressive Library Organizations: A Worldwide History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2015).
- 2 Statistics were supplied by Tobias Willstedt (BiS webmaster) and Christian Forsell, and taken from BiS annual reports.
- 3 “Säg inte att rasismen finns någon annanstans – bibliotekens antirasistiska arbete” [Do not Say Racism Is Elsewhere: Antiracist Work of the Library], BiS, 2013, <https://foreningenbis.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/bis-manifest-fc3b6r-det-antirasistiska-biblioteket.pdf>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 4 For the 2007 impressive previous project in Palestine, see Kagan, *Progressive Library Organizations*, p. 72.
- 5 For more, see Kagan, *Progressive Library Organizations*, p. 72.
- 6 “Nationell biblioteksstrategi – yttrande från BiS 2017” [National Library Strategy - Opinion from BiS 2017], <https://foreningenbis.com/arkiv/nationell-biblioteksstrategi-forslag-till-synpunkter-fran-foreningen-bis/>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 7 Ibid. The 2 documents are combined on the BiS website.
- 8 “Årsmötesprotokoll,” This section is mainly taken from the BiS annual reports, available on the BiS website in Swedish. I have done rough translations using Google Translate, <https://foreningenbis.com/foreningenbis/arsmotesprotokoll-2010/>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 9 “Läsandets kultur – remissvar” [Reading Culture: Referral], February 27, 2013, <https://foreningenbis.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/bis-lc3a4san-uppdaterad.doc>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 10 “2013 Delegation Solidarity Statement,” Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, August 2013, <http://librarianswithpalestine.org/publications/delegation-reports-statements/solidarity-statement/>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 11 For a description of the project, see the BiS chapter in Kagan, *Progressive Library Organizations*, p. 72.
- 12 “BiS kommer inte att delta på Bokmässan 2017” [BiS will not attend the 2017 Book Fair], <https://foreningenbis.com/arkiv/bis-kommer-inte-att-delta-pa-bokmassan-2017/>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 13 Personal communication from Barbro Bolonassos.
- 14 “bis och *Biblioteksbladet* debatterar biblioteksprivatiseringar 2017” [bis and *Biblioteksbladet* debate library privatizations 2017], <https://foreningenbis.com/arkiv/bis-och-biblioteksbladet-debatterar-biblioteksprivatiseringar-2017/>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 15 Tobias Willstedt, BiS webmaster, “Året enligt BiS” [The year according to BiS], <https://foreningenbis.com/page/9/>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 16 Kritische Bibliothek [Working Group Critical Library], <http://www.kribiblio.de/>
- 17 i.d.a. Dachverband deutschsprachiger Frauen / Lesbenarchive, -bibliotheken und -dokumentationsstellen [i.d.a. Umbrella organization of German-speaking women / lesbian archives libraries and documentation centers], <http://www.ida-dachverband.de/ueber-ida/>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 18 The section is mainly taken from their website and personal communications with Frauke Mahrt-Thomsen.
- 19 Nikolaus Hamann, “A Glimpse on Public Libraries in Austria, Called Öffentliche Büchereien or Öffentliche Bibliotheken, n.d., unpublished.
- 20 An expanded version was published as “Openness, Libraries and Political Transformation,” *Communication, Capitalism & Critique* 11, 2 (2013), online.
- 21 For the full story of how Greece was humbled for not adhering to neoliberal dictates as an example for other European states, see Yanis Varoufakis, *Adults in the Room: My Battle with the European and American Deep Establishment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017).
- 22 This system is used in various central and east European countries.
- 23 *Die Vorwissenschaftliche Arbeit im Fokus Österreichischer Bibliotheken* [Pre-Scientific Work in Focus of Austrian Libraries] (Wein: BVÖ, KRIBIBI, VÖB, Bundeskoordinationsstelle Literacy, [2015]).
- 24 Most of this information was taken from annual reports on the KRIBIBI website. All conferences took place in Vienna. There are some extensive reports online. The document archive is at <http://www.kribibi.at/aktivitaeten/archiv>
- 25 Most of this paragraph was derived from several emails sent to KRIBIBI members during November and December 2017.
- 26 Nikolaus Hamann to Al Kagan, email message, January 4, 2018.
- 27 <http://libr.org/isc/>
- 28 The most prominent leaders at Action Council meetings were: Herb and Mary Biblo, Gary Colmenar, Diedre Conkling, Kenny Garcia, Mark Hudson, Al Kagan, Laura Koltutsky, Charles Kratz, Jim Kuhn, Mike Marlin,

- LaJuan Pringle, Fred Stoss, Tom Twiss, Julie Winkelstein, and Nikki Winslow. SRRT's Newsletter Editor, Melissa Cardenas-Dow is active online, but has meeting conflicts that prevent her from attending Action Council meetings.
- 29 However, the ALA Membership Meetings are only held at the Annual Conferences, so resolutions brought at Midwinter go directly to the Council. Resolutions approved by ALA Membership Meetings automatically go to the ALA Council agendas, and nothing precludes a failed membership resolution from also being introduced again at the ALA Council. As one of the largest round tables, SRRT is entitled to a representative in the ALA Council, and this SRRT Counselor is elected by the SRRT membership.
- 30 Alfred Kagan, *Progressive Library Organizations: A Worldwide History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015), 202.
- 31 One of the programs included both a film and a panel.
- 32 More details and resolutions texts can be found in the SRRT Resolutions Archive through 2013, <http://libr.org/srrt/resolutionarchive.php>, in the SRRT Action Council minutes on the SRRT Newsletter Archives, <http://libr.org/srrt/newsarchive.php>, through the ALA website, <http://www.ala.org>, and very often by just doing a web search.
- 33 Prior to August 2013, Chelsea was known by the name Bradley Manning, but in accordance with her wishes the name Chelsea is used throughout this article.
- 34 Kagan, *Progressive Library Organizations*, p. 199-200.
- 35 The panel was titled, "National Security vs. the Right to Know." Although Binney was not specific, he told the audience that the NSA was basically spying on everyone and in every way. Edward Snowden eventually confirmed Binney's statements. The two other speakers were Emma Cape, organizer from the Bradley Manning Support Committee and Patrice McDermott, former director of the ALA Office of Government Relations. The panel was co-sponsored by the Law and Political Science Section (LPSS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL).
- 36 "The Reporter," NEPA Jewish Federation, <http://jewishnepabta.org/bls-web-strategies/>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 37 "Does the ALA Council Know About these Attacks?" Librarians for Fairness, 1/29/2015, 4:37:00 pm. http://librariansforfairness.org/news_post.asp?NPI=855, URL Verified April 26, 2018.
- 38 Mission statement, Librarians for Fairness, <http://librariansforfairness.org/mission.asp>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 39 Dan Kleinman, "Antisemitism at ALA Midwinter", SafeLibraries blog, January 30, 2015, <http://safelibraries.blogspot.com/2015/01/antisemitism-at-ala-midwinter.html>, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 40 *Final Report of the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*. June 2016. <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/ala-task-force-equity-diversity-and-inclusion>
- 41 Zoia Horn, *Zoia! Memoirs of Zoia Horn, Battler for the People's Right to Know* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1995).
- 42 Recognition of the 25th Anniversary of the Signing of the American's With Disabilities Act (ADA), http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2015_annual_council_documents/Tribute_7_ADA_63015_FINAL.pdf
- 43 "Libraries Under Occupation: A Conversation with Palestinian Librarians," *Progressive Librarian* no. 45 (Winter 2016/2017): 113-127.
- 44 "Academic Libraries in Palestine: Challenges and frustrations of information access in the Palestinian territories," *American Libraries*, June 27, 2016, <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/academic-libraries-palestine/>, URL verified May 30, 2018.
- 45 Full disclosure, this author has been a member of the PLG Coordinating Committee and Editorial Board for most of this time period, but he has recently dropped these responsibilities. However, he has published three articles and one editorial, and one book review in the journal over this period. The articles are "ALA, IFLA, and Israel/Palestine," no. 44 (Spring 2016): 68-92; "ALA, IFLA, and Cuba," no. 45 (Winter 2016/2017): 47-65; and "ALA, IFLA, and South Africa," no. 46 (Winter 2017/18): 63-85. The editorial is "Racism and Freedom of Speech: Framing the Issues," no. 42 (Summer 2014): 4-9.
- 46 "Interview with Elaine Harger, PLG Co-Founder," *Library Juice on the Intersection of Libraries, Politics, and Culture* blog, July 21, 2016, <https://libraryjuicepress.com/blog/?p=5330>
- 47 *Progressive Librarian: A Journal for Critical Studies & Progressive Politics in Librarianship*, http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/PL_Jnl/jnl_contents.shtml, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 48 *Progressive Librarians Guild Bulletin*, <http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/content/bulletin.shtml>, URL verified April 26, 2018.

- 49 David Lesniaski to Al Kagan, email of January 9, 2018. “The paid up continuing members and subscribers are actually 192, but 20-40 more are paid through the end of 2017, but have not yet renewed.” I have estimated that 20 of the not yet renewed will indeed renew, resulting in a membership and subscription of about 212. Of this number six to twelve are institutional subscribers.
- 50 “List of Braverman Awards: Past Miriam Braverman Memorial Prizes,” http://www.progressivelibrariansguild.org/content/braverman_list.shtml, URL verified April 26, 2018.
- 51 Most of the following information for 2013 and 2014 is derived from issues of the *Progressive Librarian Bulletin*.
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