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Special Issue on Lifelong Learners

***Information & Liberation: writings on the politics of
information & librarianship* by Shiraz Durrani. Library
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This important collection spans nearly 30 years of professional achievement in Kenya and the UK. One of Durrani's mantras is that we should 'put ideas into action' and this book is a testament to the many original and radical ideas which Shiraz has shaped and put into practice. Nelson Mandela said that 'the struggle is my life' and a similar theme runs through this book, whether it is the fight against political corruption in Africa, or the need to combat exclusion and racism in UK libraries.

Shiraz was a member of the research team that produced the seminal report *Open to All? Public Libraries and Social Exclusion* which spawned two important legacy organisations: the Network managed by John Vincent and the Quality Leaders Programme led by Shiraz. This was a positive action project for Black Library Workers, and this was succeeded by a QLP (Youth) Project. Shiraz was active in the Diversity Council which later became the CILIP Diversity Group and he was a founder member of Progressive Librarianship in Africa and Information for Social Change.

The book is divided into five sections: *Society and Information* gives a 'South perspective' on library work; *The Battle Continues in a Colder Climate* documents Durrani's pioneering work in Hackney and Merton; *Taking a Stand* covers Durrani's challenging contributions to national debates and initiatives; *Book Reviews*; and *Organise Do not Agonise* sums up his approach to libraries and life:

'It is worth remembering that social revolutions start with small sparks. But these sparks do not come from the sky. They are created by the spread of alternative ideas, vision and experiences that can ignite the imagination of

people who move forward to force change in societies. A new world is possible, as the World Social Forum teaches us. Alternative ideas have the power to give birth to this new world. The Pan African Movement urges "organise, do not agonise". And relevant information can be the spark that leads to real liberation. Mau Mau activists in Kenya urged people to "never be silent". That, in the final analysis, is also the call of progressive librarians and information workers everywhere.'