

Information for Social Change

Issue 18

January 2004

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Editorial

By John Pateman

Welcome to Issue 18 of ISC which is being published in our tenth anniversary year.

Yes, ISC is ten years old in 2004! Over the past ten years we have produced 18 issues of ISC, all of which challenge the dominant paradigms of our profession which is what we set out to achieve when we met and discussed the foundation of ISC at Oxford in 1994. At the time we felt that there was no outlet for radical, progressive, challenging LIS articles and we still feel that there is no outlet for this material in the mainstream professional press. If anything, the situation has got worse over the last ten years the LA Record has been replaced by Update, which is more focussed on the needs of information providers than information receivers; and the Assistant Librarian (which was very radical in the past) is now the turgid journal of the Career Development Group (and you cant get more turgid than that).

The only positive development has been that Ruth Rikowski is now the Series Editor for the New Books for Information Professionals by Chandos Publishing. Ruth is also a member of the ISC editorial board. ISC hopes to add to this series later this year with a book on Radical Library and Information Work : Issues and Ideas. You can find out more information about the Chandos series in this issue.

In celebrating ten years of ISC we also remember those who went before us and paved the way for radical LIS journals in the UK. I refer, of course, to our illustrious predecessor

Librarians for Social Change (LSC), from whom we shamelessly stole our title. One of the leading lights in LSC was John Lindsay. In 1979 John wrote a pamphlet for LSC on Radical Librarianship. This is the blurb which appeared on the back of the pamphlet:

“John Lindsay was a school librarian in Hackney, East London, when he wrote this pamphlet. He is now, at the time of publishing, “resting”, as they say in the acting profession.

Possessor of an indefatigable amount of energy, he believes that the present capitalistic society is unjust, and that a more equitable society must emerge. He is most insistent that that new society emerges during his lifetime. He believes, like other members of Librarians for Social Change, that libraries, and the other parts of the information system, should play an important role in the changeover to a new society.

John Lindsay is Co-ordinator of the Gay Librarians Group, and of the Gay Studies Library; a founder-member of Libraries Against the Cuts, and Libraries Against Racism; and a member of Librarians for Social Change, the Library Association, and the Socialist Workers Party.

He is a frequent writer on librarianship, the media, gay studies, and socialism. He has contributed articles to, amongst others, the Journal of Librarianship, Gay Left, Librarians for Social Change, and the Education Bulletin of the Institute of Education, University of London.”

Reading this, I was struck by three things. First, the range of radical library organisations which existed in 1979. Today there are very few, such as ISC, Link, Cuban Libraries Solidarity Group (CLSG) and The Network.

Second, the combination of activism and ideas. Again, there are not many people like that in the LIS world today, with notable exceptions. Martyn Lowe, for example, founded ISC by building on his experience of activism in Operation Namibia,

Librarians Within the Peace Movement, and War Resisters International. Here he contributes his thoughts on The Hidden Agenda and Information Gaps.

Third, the hopes that John aspired to replace capitalist society with a fairer system are shared by ISC and by Fidel Castro and the people of Cuba. Which brings me onto another major theme of this issue.

In June 2003 the Third International Congress of Culture and Development was held at the international convention centre in Havana, Cuba. Two members of ISC, John Pateman and Gillian Harris, attended this event. One of the conference forums (Forum 8) was about the role of libraries in culture and development. This Forum was chaired by Eliades Acosta, the Director of the National Library of Cuba (the Biblioteca Nacional Jose Marti). John Pateman presented a paper to this Forum, which is reproduced here. This issue also contains a report of the congress, and a resolution produced by its participants.

While we were in Havana, we also met with representatives of the Cuban public services union, SNTAP, who have developed a twinning link with UNISON in greater London. We also joined a one million strong march (which was organised at 24 hours notice) to protest against the measures taken against Cuba by the EU. At the closing ceremony of the Congress, held in the Karl Marx theatre, we were privileged to hear Fidel Castro speak on the dangers facing Cuba from Bush and Blair. I was asked onto the platform with Comrade Fidel in recognition of the National Culture Award which was presented to me by the Cuban government last year. Being on the same platform as Fidel Castro was a defining moment in my life and something I will never forget. We also include an open letter to the librarians of the world from the Cuban library association, ASCUBI.

From our very first issue, ISC has always given plenty of space to international affairs, and this issue is no exception to that rule. We have reports on the World Summit on the Information Society (also by John Lindsay) and the IFLA/EBLIDA talks with the World Trade Organisation and the European Commission about GATS and libraries, to which Ruth Rikowski contributed questions. We also reproduce the CILIP Response to Liberalising Trade in services: a new consultation on the World Trade Organisation GATS negotiations. This response, which draws very heavily on Globalisation and Information (ISC 14, edited by Ruth Rikowski) appeared on the CILIP website in January 2003, with no publicity and no acknowledgement of ISC or Ruth Rikowski. This was a significant omission, especially as ISC is an Organisation in Liaison with CILIP. Completing this section is Information Services and the Independent Public Library by Anders Ericson

Our final section, Any Other Business, includes book reviews, information about alternative information sources, and news about progressive organisations. It has been a privilege to edit ISC over the last ten years and I am confident that ISC will continue to appear for many years to come. I would particularly like to thank the ISC editorial committee - Gillian Harris, Ruth Rikowski, Martyn Lowe and John Vincent - for all their hard work and support and I look forward to working with them in the future as we continue to struggle collectively to not only understand the world, but also to change it for the better.

Venceremos!

Part One: Past and Present

In his 1979 pamphlet *Radical Librarianship* (LSC, 1979) John Lindsay ran through the main components of radical librarianship, which he divided into three main sections - service, stock and study ("the study of the problems that I face on a day to day basis and the attempt to find coherent, consistent and logical conclusions to those problems"). John also wrote a section on the relations of production and consumption of knowledge. John concluded that in order to put his ideas into action "That is going to require a social transformation of such magnitude that the people who involve themselves in this process are generally called by the Sun and the Daily Mail 'revolutionaries'. What they call themselves depends on how tired they are as a result of having spent the last twenty four hours involved in it."

We asked John to contribute an article to this 10th anniversary edition of ISC. We asked him if anything had changed since he wrote *Radical Librarianship* in 1979 and what his thoughts were on today's LIS world and the need to change it.

1. The Big Issues

by John Lindsay

Shortly after publishing *Radical Librarianship*, John Noyce and I decided to change the name of *Librarians for Social Change* to *Information Systems and Social Change*. It seemed to us that the role of the computer had become so significant that it was going to be the systematising of the processes of information which was where the political action was going to lie. And that action would not necessarily be in a libertarian or socialist, or pro poor direction.

Shortly afterwards, John decided to move to Australia. I had joined the International Socialists, now the Socialist Workers' Party, and for right or for wrong, it had been decided that after Thatcher's defeat of Labour and then the failure of a fight back, that the SWP had to concentrate on holding itself together and pull in activities. This meant I withdrew from putting resources into keeping either LfSC or Gay Rights and Work and the Gay Librarians' Group functioning. Either there was no one else, or the ideas had run out of steam.

Librarians for Social Change had never been more than a magazine and a loose group of people who shared only a general idea: the idea was that libraries were agencies of social action and that action ought to be progressive. Thereafter we divided. Some were part of the women's movement and into women's liberation, some were anarchists and libertarians, some were socialists. But there was almost as much which divided as united.

Political activity moved into *Libraries Open and Free*, defending a free and open public library system in the face of cuts and closures. The school in which I had done the *Need to Know* project had been closed down, then the

whole of the Inner London Education Authority, then the whole of the Greater London Council. But it must be borne in mind that these struggles were not only over public expenditure after Healey returned from the International Monetary Fund (thirty years before Stiglitz in Globalisation discovered the role of the IMF), but were over the nature of information and knowledge in an information and knowledge society. They were over the commodity.

Now, nearly thirty years later we are in preparation for the World Summit on the Information Society and the United States first lady, a one time librarian, has joined UNESCO. How can we tease out the threads of argument I addressed in Radical Librarianship?

The first must be the role of the computer and the development of what is now called the Internet and the World Wide Web. From the point of view of the information seeker, this must have been almost unreservedly progressive. When I was a child my parents could not afford the Encyclopedia Britannica. It was in current money about £1,000. Now it is less than ten pounds on a CD. That is a shift of two orders of magnitude in price, downwards. What would be the equivalent of that in my day job, teaching? Now it is true that billions do not have access to the internet, but they do not have access to the Encyclopedia Britannica either, or a public library, or perhaps any books at all.

If you take the meaning of information and information systems in the 1977 version of the Encyclopedia Britannica, I understood what it meant, in the context of radical librarianship. Now we have at least nine different meanings of information, and in the UNESCO strategy paper for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a list of activities which make an interesting combination.

The introductory paragraph held for me three sections which gives us an opportunity to consider what the summit is for and what might be gained by participating. It suggested:

"The emergence of the Information Society is a revolution comparable to the deep transformation of the world engendered by the invention of the alphabet and the printing press."

Now we might recognise the relation between the printing press and the cutting off of the King of England's head, so what will this new revolution engender?

Secondly it asserted "A new culture is emerging based on symbols, codes, models, programs, formal languages, algorithms, virtual representations, mental landscapes, which imply the need for a new 'information literacy'".

Now in what sense this culture will be new, and what it will inherit from the old challenges us as information professionals. The list of categories is interesting, and so too is the privileging of literacy which implies text and linearity.

"They also hold the promise that many of the problems confronting human societies could be significantly alleviated if only the requisite information and expertise were systematically and equitably employed and shared."

So we have information and system along with equity and sharing. This is a challenge to information professionals. What do we mean by information?

The world wide web and the internet allows anyone to become a publisher. When I first became involved in radicalising information it was working out the role of the Xerox photocopier, then the lettraset and paper plate offset litho, a step forward on the banda. Now digital cameras, html editors and a phone line allow anyone to be a publisher, and you cannot tell the difference. Perhaps for most music is even more important? Lending records was never a mainstream public library activity. Indeed in the face of tight budgets, I recall arguing that while the core public library information provision must be as a democratic right and remain free and open, there was no reason why other activities could not be charged for.

Following the logic of the computer, the political implication was access. In 1992 I tried to ensure that the joint academic network extended itself to all public libraries, schools and museums, hospitals, prisons. I thought I had achieved it, but discovered I had not.

This takes us beyond information, however we might consider it, to network structure. And that takes us to the privatisation and liberalisation of telecommunications markets. This is a bigger issue than librarianship in itself. It also takes me away from being able to communicate with the immediate interests of most who consider themselves librarians. This is going to be a major issue at the World Summit.

The second must be the commodification and monetisation of public service. This in Blairspeak is now called modernisation. It was with Thatcher called market testing or privatisation. One does prefer fighting people who use plain words. The public library service in Britain was in retrospect remarkably successful in defending a core. The school library service fared much worse. The university library service fared well. In terms of making university services available to the whole population the case is mixed. Now the General Agreement on Trades and Services (GATS) perhaps opens up again the whole battle. But outwith Britain the story is much less bright.

Tied to this is tradable intellectual property rights (TRIPS). One line of argument is in favour of protecting indigenous knowledge rights so poor people might play the game. But the game is wrong. A private property right has a market clearing process where the externalities are systematically under priced. The extension of copyright to business models and patents to business processes is going to increase the contradictions and make simple things inoperable.

The third might be information planning. It is twenty years since I realised the emerging importance of databases, and networking, since I was able to communicate remotely with another computer and access a resource with terminal emulator. Accessing a library catalogue without having to go to the library, accessing all library catalogues, seemed to me the first big step in information for a long time.

It is also twenty years since I called the first meeting of what became the information for development forum (IDF). That was on the premise that with what the new technology permitted we could re-organise the availability of information about international development, about the third world, about pro poor policies (to use the phrase of Clare Short in the globalisation and development white paper). Much has been written on this, and perhaps one day I shall try to pull it together.

But the experience of IDF goes in parallel with the story of the Library and Information Services Council, LISC, and what then became the National Forum on Information Planning, now hovering near death.

There are I think social rules which determine that the centripetal forces are more powerful than the centrifugal, that people orient to one core goal or mission, that detailed thinking predominates over holistic, that the pressure for competition is much stronger than that for co-operation, but it does seem the case that collaborative planning is very difficult, and being focused on the detail of what a particular organisation delivers highly driven. More needs to be done on this, and on the history of information planning, but for now I will leave it.

The fourth information literacy, for the UNESCO paper mentions it? On meeting to consider what we know about it. This is a continuation of what I had done at South Hackney School, and also of the founding of Gay Switchboard. The report is on the internet so we need no more here: www.ideography.co.uk/wsis-focus/meeting/21jan2003report.html as part of the preparation of the UK National Commission for UNESCO for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The fifth metadata. If we think back to our core competences and the tools of which we have experience, Dewey, Library of Congress Subject Headings, UDC perhaps, and the arguments we had thirty years ago, now we have Dublin core and no arguments?

I remarked a while ago on lis-link@jiscmail.ac.uk in the context of the US invasion of Iraq that Christianity still has most of the 200 space, and while I think all religions ought to be in the 390s giving us the 200s for new concepts, it is certainly not right that Judaism and Muslim should be squeezed into a corner. That is enough to make one a terrorist.

COPAC though shows the implications of what is possible. We always needed a taxonomy of information. I used something, anything, everything, the latest, the best (SAELB). We also had to distinguish between knowing whether something existed and knowing what exists. If I have an author and a title it is now easier than ever to have access. But knowing what relates to that thing is now demonstrated with the COPAC use of Library of Congress Subject headings in the clump. But it still depends on the practice. Timothy Mowl wrote a book on Horace Walpole in which he demonstrated something

of a gay consciousness in Walpole's time. But the subject headings lose this entirely.

It seemed to me strange, when I first worked it out, that classification schemes and library organising practices are ideological, and part of a process of the dominant ideas being the ideas of the ruling class, even if the contradictions open up opportunities for deviancy, that no one else seemed to be interested. This remains the case. Foucault does not mention libraries as part of the ordering of things or the architecture of knowledge. No one who considers ideologies seems to see libraries.

Now we have open government, government direct, the electronic governance interoperability framework and the government metadata framework. We also have best value, life long learning, social inclusion, sustainable environments and economic development.

Perhaps the only ray of sunshine I see in all this, is the argument following Rio in 1992, that we must focus on sustainable development, whatever that means, and for information systems designers we must concentrate on integrated indicators. This is clearly not easy. The failure of the Blair government on integrated transport, health promotion, waste reduction, social inclusion or any other of a host of policies indicates that these goods cannot be delivered within the Blairite modernisation framework. With these it is possible to argue with a new generation of potential political activists and that must be the orientation.

I think we have to clear away the undergrowth. Some talk of knowledge management and some of content management. Some of databases and some of documents.

It worries me that most of all this is probably incomprehensible to the vast bulk of the population, and probably even those with university training. I watch people in a wide variety of jobs using a computer and the internet and they seem not to have a passing understanding of what they are doing, or the implications.

I wonder now whether I have lost that clarity which perhaps I had thirty years ago? But where are the young people who were on the march against Bush and Blair over Iraq within debates on what the role of a professional now might be?

But one cannot allow oneself despondency. One antidote is something interesting, so I am building the landscape gallery, as we do not have one. Simply joining all the really beautiful places together with footpaths and public transport, and green and smart, the idea that walking and public transport are sustainable development. <http://www.greenandsmart.org> .

2. The Hidden Agenda or How right wing concepts of so called politically “neutral” information affects the way in which many library workers are being duped into being used

by Martyn Lowe

I would guess that very few of us would argue that the materials provided within ones local public library should not reflect the local information and interest needs of the society in which it serves.

Yet there are hidden agendas and some political biases within so called “neutral” sources of information : resources which are VERY questionable in nature. Yet - however much we might think that such needs are being meet - the percentage provision of library materials which reflect more than the perspective and social values of so called “professional” librarians is still very small indeed.

For example: in the UK where a large number of people buy there own homes, we can find a lot of books about buying, selling, or renting out properties within public libraries. While the number of books about the legal rights of private tenants are very small indeed! Try and get hold of the “Squatters Handbook” within your local public library. Just look at any OPAC (library catalogue) and you will see just what I mean.

Then there is the issue of making libraries “Family Friendly” - Ha! Ha! Just you try that one in terms of how this relates to the needs of a single parent, or in terms of the information needs of those of us who happen to be single ! Something upon how the so-called unbiased presentation of information, which the library profession aspires to, has been hi-jacked by the fiscal priorities and perceptions of the property owning middle class, multi-nationals, or just the sociological and political perspectives of a few very overpaid library managers ?

In turn this relates to just what library workers earn. I keep saying this, (and many of you might find it a bore that I repeat it), so yet one more time again, - just how many library holdings address the kind of situation which many library workers find themselves in ? Too poor ever to be able to be more than just a private tenant for the rest of their lives. While even couples who are working within the library world will never be able to own their own homes. In other words - what we have is a situation in which a commitment towards working within a profession that gives a provision of information for all, means that we in turn commit ourselves to a level of long term poverty. Is it thus not a wonder that no more than a smaller and smaller number of people commit themselves towards a career in front line library work ?

I have no figures to support this claim, but from my experience in libraries - this means that we are not going to attract many bright young people into front

line library work. The end result being that a lot of good experience in information work is being lost, as we find an increasing turn over of younger frontline workers, while older staff just keep going in order to try and maximise their pension. This is a problem which is a long time due addressing !!!

Long term effects could be disastrous, as there is an age differential and experience loss, which will need to be addressed. In turn this relates to the various issues upon just how we might create a unified profession.

The statistical lie, or inflation and wages, and how the selective range of data distorts our world picture

I keep reading that the official UK rate of inflation is just 2.5%, while house prices have risen by circa 18%. Yet by the same token my public transport costs seems to increase on an average of circ 4 - 5 % a year. While in the borough I work for - the last increase in council tax was just a minor 20%. Yet the basis upon which my wages have been increased, are based upon a fictional governmental rate of 2.5%. Thank god that I do not live in the borough I work in! All of which proves that one should never trust statistical information.

Which also reminds me of a remark made by my old anarchist friend Otto: what Karl Marx spent many years researching and writing upon in the British Museum Library, any worker could tell you about, by just looking at their wage packet at the end of the week! All of which illustrates just why we should increasingly not just be aware of the figures, but how they are compiled.

Of course - in turn if we were to look at the economic savings that are to be made by the labours of any good information worker - then our real value to the economy should be assessed as much higher than we are at present given the credit for. I for one can give a lot of examples of how by giving out the right kind of information, then I have saved a lot of money that might otherwise have been spent by those library users that I have helped.

Well - you get the point - how the assessment of the economic value of library work is not being judged properly as long as library statistics are just determined in terms of books issued, etc.

And what of an alternative viewpoint ?

With the decline in money spent on reference books within public libraries, there is an increasing dependence upon the web in order to provide information to library users. Yet at the same time there would seem to be no real programme within public libraries to educate library staff upon more than just the use of search Engines such as Google. This could also make for an article which looks at the relative value of a selective number of websites, and how they are biased. In turn this could include a review of Google and Googlewatch, a critique of Google news which is an automated process, how search engine listings are manipulated, and the alternatives which could prove as interesting to a lot of our readers, especially if we were to illustrate

how this works out in practice. See: <http://www.google-watch.org/> This should also give information about such web pages as Indymedia, and Search Engine news.

My critique of how most librarians and front line library workers learn about web pages as a resource is that they just get to know about such websites as the UK government portal, BBC website, and a limited range of bodies such as the RNIB, etc. All of which we are informed are “safe and reliable” websites recommended by reference librarians, most of whom who have a conservative (with a very small c) world view.

From my experience of library work - there are very few people in the trade who would be able to talk with one upon the structure of Indymedia, and how it might best be used. Traditionally there has always been training in libraries to inform staff about the use of reference works, but when it comes to the web - well we seem to have lost the plot.

So a few ideas upon how library staff could start to learn about such media would not go amiss. A good exercise in this context would be in how to produce a radical events list, put together from various web pages. Ditto alternative legal information from such as SAS (the Squatting Advisory service), and the Activists Legal Project. Now just you try it!

Does your local library hold the Squatters Handbook ? If not - then check it out at: <http://www.squat.freeserve.co.uk/> or <http://www.squat.freeserve.co.uk/handbook/>

Another Approach

Here is a tip that you might like to know about and let others know about too. It can also be used as an exercise in how to search for alternative literature via the web. Have you ever done a Google search with just an ISBN ? Well just try this one - ' ISBN 0224069829 '. You get with this a good book which I would recommend you to read ! It is about the book by Joe Sacco called “Palestine”.

Do it as 0224069829 - its correct numerical breakdown - and what you will get is gobildy Google. Something which alternative or radical publishers should keep in mind when adding ISBN information to their websites. Such a technique could help in terms of promoting alternative literature. Just try it out and see what you get.

Of course there is another aspect to this which could be developed for future use. Just imagine this - a library catalogue / Opac which would include a field for web page reviews of just what is on one’s library holdings. If this kind of approach could be developed, then imagine just what power of information access it would give to any library user.

In turn such an approach to how a library catalogue is constructed could help to break the power of the big publishers, etc. I would be interested in any

feedback upon such an approach to catalogue work. Of course if such a Library Opac were to be set up, then it need not become a Google search, but just take one to a set of links upon the book(s) in question. This begs a question about "professional judgement" to such an approach ?

Another great advantage of doing an ISBN search on Google is that it can put you into contact with many of the small radical publishers, from whom one can directly order books and periodicals. Thus helping to break the power of the big book vendors and the likes of Amazon - Hurrah ! Hurrah ! There are also great fiscal savings to be made by both publishers and libraries as a result.

So what am I to believe ? What I am being told ? Or what I learn by my own experience ? I am aware that I know more about what is going on in the world by reading Emails and looking at websites, than reading the same information in periodicals a few months later.

I do not think that many library managers have caught on to this fact of modern life yet. One can still find that a lot of them do not know how to use web pages and they are still blinkered by their belief in how the printed page is the only form of publication upon which good factual material might be found.

Something about the message and the medium, which Marshall McLuhan would really have enjoyed working on within our digital age. An Intervention by the Easter Bunny - 1st answers by Email and you get a pint of beer at my favourite pub, the Boot & Truncheon. In which Woody Allen movie did Marshall McLuhan make a brief appearance ?

So What ?

You might view all of the above from an academic perspective and not like what I have to say, but the reality is that all of these are issues which I face on a day by hour basis. Is it any wonder that I have a problem with the values and ideas that most library managers try to impose upon the provision of information within most public libraries ? The problem of how the provision of information within public libraries does not come down to what is available via the net or in book form, but has more to do with an understanding of the material, something which almost all library managers have failed to come to terms with!

As to the value judgements made about various subjects within libraries, let me give you just one example. We find witchcraft placed under superstition, rather than religion, which just about sums things up! I just remain a born again atheist! I rest my case!

3. Information Gaps - a reflection on the conservative view of information work. Or, does a dyslexic information view of the world help in library work ?

By Martyn Lowe

Art or Science ??

I have an arts and not a scientific training. Aside from my time at C & W May (theatrical costumiers) during the period 1968-1973 - I also spent a year at art School. I also practice the art of paper cutting, and collect paper cuts from around the world. My ideal weekend includes a visit to both a book and music Store, plus to a museum or art gallery. What I know about science has been sparked off in order to know something as a result of my political work. For example: In respect to the anti-nukiller-power work I was very heavily engaged in between 1974 - 1984.

Scanner or Proof reader ?

I'll also confess to being a lateral thinker, which means that I can sometimes come up with ideas, without having to do the jump by stage work in reaching it. Though as the years go by - having come to a conclusion I find it then much easier to display the steps involved in doing so, rather than taking an 'how did I do that ? ' frame of mind.

Now this also relates to how most librarians are by nature proof readers, rather than scanners. The proof reader being a librarian who looks at the details and can get them right, but has no overall view or vision. The scanner is the very opposite of a proof reader. Able to look at a lot of information / resources, and note key points, interesting points, technical points and new issues which the proof reader might not get around to read up about. The great thing about a scanner being that such a person is able to note gaps and alert one to new issues. Most of the training and thinking about library and information work favours the proof reader. They spend too much time cataloguing what there is around, looking at what is available, rather than looking for the gaps and how to plug them.

An exercise in logic

While at art school I was once given an exercise - to look at a chair, and to tell what it is used for. No it is not just to sit upon. It is a question of how it is used. The most common other use is as a step-ladder (I do). It can also be used as a desk top (I do), a shoe tree (I do), an ironing board base (sometimes I do), or a club (not me!). My uncle John once asked me to look at a chair, while we were both in the pub together, and then break it down into its component parts, after which I was then able to work out just how it was put together. That was the thing about John - he could look at something and just know how it was put together. A useful point to keep in mind if you are looking at ways in which to protect your

home, or smash up a military aircraft. It all comes down to the same kind of mindset - look at what is the weakest point and then work on it ! Very useful as I demolished a desk the other week !

Now the thing about John was that he became a self-made multi-millionaire. John was also my landlord. I used to pay over my rent to him in the pub, and while he filled in my rent card, he would give me a pound to go to the bar and get myself a pint of beer. It was by spending time drinking with him that I got a lot of my education about the real world. At one stage he owned 80 houses and a mansion block. At the age of 68 he was also known to turn up at one of his tenants and fix their toilet for them. Just how many millionaires do you know who will turn up on a Sunday afternoon to fix your loo ????? Why waste money in paying wages to get done something that one could do for oneself? And this from someone who became his own stockbroker in order to save himself a bob or two.

I once came upon him at a table outside of the pub, with pint in hand, looking at the financial page of the paper going through the stocks and shares in order to find out what he was worth. It did not cost him anything - he picked up a discarded newspaper in the pub, a copy of the Sun. John should be recorded as the only millionaire who has ever used the Sun, which is best known for its page 3 nudes, as an information tool in order to discover just what he was worth.

The financial pages of the Sun are very good at headline issues, though one might be better able to find out more upon these issues within the Financial Times. John was also someone that could do maths and percentages from the top of his head. From all this you will gather that he was a very clever and intelligent man. Yet John suffered from the family trait of dyslexia. John sometimes had a habit of writing a sum down in reverse - say 6578 instead of 8756. In me this comes out when I write something down last word first, and then find I have no room on the page to write down the words that come before it.

My mother, who was a book-keeper by trade, also suffers from dyslexia. She also worried about the signs that I showed of this trait as a child. Over the years I have cured myself of some of these dyslexic problems, though I guess that I shall always write like I speak (I can vouch for that editor!). Nothing wrong with that - just read Gertrude Stein.

An overview

In my early teens I would borrow books by Jules Verne, H.G.Wells, Robert Heinlein, and art books from my local library. The H.G.Wells work "A Short History of the World" and E.H. Gombrich "The Story of Art" both gave me an in depth overview of the world, while the science fiction fired my imagination. The point being that all of the above does raise some interesting questions in relationship to library work. Like in terms of just looking at details, or in just how we take an overview. Are we as librarians and information workers getting the balance between the two right?

In the meanwhile I'd like to hear from any librarians or information workers who suffer from dyslexia to a greater or lesser extent. It might make for an interesting article, but it could raise some interesting questions too.

Part Two : International Issues

4. WSISues

by John Lindsay

The World Summit on the Information Society, part one, will be held in Geneva in December 2003. The second part will be held in Tunis in 2004. This summit is convened by the ITU (International Telecommunications Union) with support from UNESCO.

It follows a series of summits including that on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg last year and is intended to set a framework for a range of policy issues which include bridging the digital divide.

The Department for International Development in Britain, (DfID), prepared a white paper several years ago on Globalisation and Development in which was proposed support for pro poor policies, for international public goods, where it was suggested that Britain's contribution to international development was through knowledge and research, and where the Minister argued that the enemies of international development were negativism and cynicism, and that people of moral conscience had a obligation to oppose these.

The British Computer Society Developing Countries Specialist Group (BCSDCSG) through the Information for Development Forum (IDF) was involved in the consultation process of producing the White Paper. We were also involved in the Global Knowledge Partnership process initiated by the World Bank, and organised in Britain by the British Council.

When the UK national commission on UNESCO convened a work programme in preparation for the World Summit, we participated in that, and were represented in Paris at the initial meeting convened by UNESCO. When its strategy paper for the Summit was produced, we argued for, and gained acceptance, that the interoperability of metadata standards should be recognised as an international public good.

During the Creating Sparks Millennium Festival organised by the British Association for the Advancement of Science we organised a meeting of sixteen core professional societies, chaired by the President of the BCS at that time, at which we produced a manifesto for the role of information and communication technologies and the design of information systems in the development of the information society.

Recognising that the section of the UNESCO strategy paper's recognition of the role of information literacy was possibly the area where we had the most

to contribute as a professional institution, we organised a working party on the topic to pull together what we understood to be the current understanding of the issues on the topic. The report of that work is available on <http://www.ideography.co.uk/wsis-focus/meeting/21jan2003report.html>

One of the issues which has predominated at recent world summits, is the participation of civil society. In Seattle and Genoa this took the form of very large demonstrations outside, on issues of fair trade, sustainable environments, treatment of third world debt, and the globalisation and privatisation of intellectual property rights.

The response of the UN system was to set up a mechanism whereby the representatives of civil society may be involved in the process of formulation and decision taking, rather than the summit being simply ministers of governments. This partnership process was lead in Britain by the British Council.

As the British Computer Society, the national representative of IFIP and as IFIP is the international body in consultation with UNESCO we also should have a direct role into UNESCO and into the British Government, as well as participation through the established channels.

Still the British Government has not decided which minister will lead at the Summit, or who will go, according to the Foreign Office at the last meeting of preparation of civil society. It is now certainly too late to influence any further the process of the Geneva summit. We must wait for the declaration. Once we see the declaration we may then decide it fully supports the policies we have argued for, that it supports in part, or that there are issues which we feel contravene our obligations to public good outlined in our Charter.

We will organise a meeting, in collaboration with the Information for Development Forum to form an opinion, which will be published on the group list, bc-devel@jiscmail.ac.uk. In parallel we will organise a meeting in collaboration with the Learning and Teaching Support Network in Information and Computing Sciences (LTSN-ICS) on metadata, continuing the work already started, LTSN-ICS-METADATA@JISCMail.AC.UK. Should it be necessary we will also reconvene the workshop on information literacy.

On the basis of the results of these meeting we will then decide whether there is a necessary work programme in preparation for the summit in Tunis in 2005. It seems likely that the core issues of the declaration will include solutions to the digital divide, positions on intellectual property rights, perhaps including reference to the EU proposed law on computer patents, and possibly on the liberalisation of telecommunications markets. All these are likely to be contentious, so it might be that we are completely wrong and all that emerges is something anodyne with which no one can disagree. However the collapse of the Cancun round of the World Trade Organisation discussion, following Doha, indicates that international development is in choppy water.

5. The IFLA/EBLIDA talks with the World Trade Organization and the European Commission about GATS and libraries, 18 December 2002 report to the Executive Committee of EBLIDA

by Kjell Nilsson

On the 18th of December 2002, a joint delegation from IFLA and EBLIDA visited Geneva to meet separately with representatives of the WTO and of the European Commission's delegation to the WTO.

The visitors were:

- *Frode Bakken*, president of the Norwegian Library Association and the then chairman of the EBLIDA working group on WTO-related matters
- *Teresa Hackett*, the then Director of EBLIDA
- *Ross Shimmon*, Secretary General of IFLA, and
- *Myself*, member of the IFLA/CLM working group on WTO-related matters and the current chairman of the EBLIDA working group

The purpose of the trip was to have discussions with WTO and EC officials about the potential impact of GATS on publicly funded libraries. It was more of a fact-finding mission than a lobbying one. We had quite a few questions on our list, and several people contributed to that list.

WTO

At the WTO headquarters we met with:

- *Dale Honeck*, GATS counsellor for Culture
- *Pierre Latrille*, GATS counsellor for Education, and
- *Martin Roy*, Economic Affairs Officer of the GATS secretariat

The two most fundamental questions we raised with the WTO people were:

- Are the services of publicly funded libraries included in the scope of GATS, or should they be regarded as "supplied in the exercise of governmental authority" (article 1:3 C) and therefore by definition be excluded from the treaty?
- Are there any sectors in the treaty, except sub-sector 10 C: "Libraries, archives, and museums" and sector 5: "Educational services" that involve library services? (For instance, where do you place library services provided online?)

We had a very open-minded conversation that stretched far beyond the scheduled two hours, but the answers we received were not very clarifying. The counsellors seemed fairly uncertain about their interpretations of the treaty and they also

disagreed between themselves on some of them. Nevertheless, our conclusions were that:

The services of publicly funded libraries are definitely within the scope of the GATS agreement; only services supplied by public monopolies fall outside. Online library services might, if we are unlucky, go into sector 2 B: "Computer and related services", a sector which has in fact already been committed by the European Union.

To be honest, it has to be said that the UN classification scheme (CPC), which forms the basis of the GATS treaty, places "information retrieval from databases" among "Library services" (96311), but my guess is it will not stay there for much longer. The UN scheme is 15 years old, it is already being supplemented by the WTO Services Sectoral Classification List ("W/120"), and clearly online information retrieval services cannot logically be restricted to libraries. Actually, in this field, publicly funded libraries are being consistently challenged by private companies.

European Commission

At the EC delegation we met with Ann Mary Redmond, who is one of the EC officials involved in the GATS negotiations.

Our purpose in meeting with her was primarily to find out more about the relationship between the EC and the member states in these negotiations. What we found out was essentially that:

- The European Commission collectively makes the requests and offers on behalf of the member states.
- The discussions around GATS take place in the "Article 133 committee" in which officials from the national trade ministries meet regularly (approximately every two weeks).
- Should it be impossible to reach consensus, the individual member states can derogate from the line of the EC. However, this will probably not stay that way for long. The so-called Nice Treaty opens up for majority voting on trade issues.

Current status of the GATS negotiations

Following the WTO meeting in Qatar in November 2001 a request/offer process was initiated in the GATS negotiations. Requests should have been made by the end of June 2002, offers by the end of March 2003. Until now, most of the member states have done neither. The EC has done both.

The EC has presented the requests made to and offers made by the European Union, and prior to making its offers it opened the floor to comments. The EBLIDA response, basically urging the EC not to commit sub-sector 10 C, was published on 9 January this year. And, in fact, the EC did not make any requests or offers pertaining to 10 C. However, Austria, before joining the European Union, for some strange reason committed this sector with no restrictions at all.

Because of the unexpectedly slow process it is very unlikely that the upcoming WTO meeting in Cancun, Mexico, 10-14 September 2003, will entail any decisions on GATS offers. That is not at all to say we should not attentively and continuously observe what is happening in the negotiations.

Conclusions

A lasting impression from our talks in Geneva is that a complex international treaty like GATS gives room for different interpretations. Also, it is a live organism, the wording of which might be subject to many changes during its lifetime.

Although some 20 countries already committed sub-sector 10 C, it is fair to say that library services has not been one of the most targeted areas in the GATS negotiations. Nevertheless, librarians will have to watch out.

There are several issues which need particular attention, e.g.:

- “*Educational services*” (which is certainly one of the most attractive targets, and which, in many countries, includes a substantial part of the publicly funded libraries).

A commitment has already been made by the EC for “privately funded services”. Obviously, if the publicly funded ones are to remain untouched, libraries will not be the most important argument. But we can note with satisfaction that large national and international university associations have issued statements against any plans to commit publicly funded universities. And of course we should give our support to such resistance, guided by our overriding goal of open access to information.

There seems to be some uncertainty around the funding issue. For instance, many publicly funded universities offer fee-based courses for private companies.

- A WTO book on GATS and education is expected before the end of this year. *Online library services.*

As I indicated above, I do not think that fighting this battle on the classification field is a very good idea in the long run. Better then to fall back on the existing horizontal limitation to the national treatment principle inscribed in the EC’s schedule of specific commitments, stating as regards commercial presence (mode 3) that:

- “the EC has reserved its right to supply, or subsidize, a service within the public sector without breaching its national treatment commitments.”

The EC has a working group looking at the issues concerning electronic services.

The ones who should watch out are primarily the national library associations, which should get in touch with their government trade officials and articulate their concerns. On the international level I am confident organizations like EBLIDA and IFLA will continue to support the cause of publicly funded, openly accessible libraries.

To do that in an adequate way we have to analyze, raise awareness, and advocate. Of course, this is not something that should be done successively, one thing after the other. On the contrary, we have to work in parallel on all of it. At the moment, awareness raising seems to be the most urgent task. On the library side there are simply too few people who are knowledgeable on this subject.

Partly for that very reason, it is extremely important that we cooperate internationally, in and outside Europe.

6. CILIP Response to Liberalising Trade in services: a new consultation on the World Trade Organisation GATS negotiations

CILIP - the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals - is the professional body for those working in library and information services or information science in the UK and has 24000 members. Many of our members work in public and national libraries, and other library or information units within local and central government, the health services, business and industry, science and technology, further and higher education, schools and the voluntary sector. Under the terms of our Royal Charter we have a duty to scrutinise any legislation or other proposals affecting the provision of library and information services as well as support and promote the knowledge, skills and qualifications of our members.

CILIP is concerned to ensure that the Government is aware of the diverse nature and full extent of the role of publicly funded library and information services in the UK. Together with international colleagues in IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) and EBLIDA (European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations), we take a keen interest in the WTO GATS negotiations and we welcome this opportunity to provide comments as part of this consultation process.

Libraries are included in the GATS category '**Recreational, Sporting and Cultural Services**' under '*libraries, archives, museums and other cultural services.*'

However we would point out that library services play a central role in the provision of '**Educational Services**' in the UK. With the arrival of the People's Network a national network providing access to the Internet and other public services at every public library service point in the UK, libraries are key providers of information in the digital environment, even though they are not specifically listed in '**Communications Services**' under '*on-line information and data base retrieval; electronic data interchange (EDI).*'

The societal, cultural and educational roles of libraries

The publicly-funded library is one of the most democratic of institutions, serving the needs of citizens, regardless of their age, gender, educational level, learning ability, employment, ethnic origin or wealth. As a public space, the library helps to define a sense of community, providing a safe and neutral meeting point. At different times in their lives, people see libraries as a: place of wide-eyed discovery;

- tool for lifelong learning;
- support for political and social enquiry;
- bank of ideas and inspiration;

- source of answers to factual questions;
- place to acquire new skills;
- community centre;
- local history resource;
- place of leisure and enjoyment.

Lifelong learning and the role of the library in combating the digital divide

Publicly funded services offered by libraries, archives, museums and educational institutions constitute vital building blocks in the development of the knowledge and information society in which all citizens benefit from access to culture, knowledge and information.

Libraries and archives empower citizens by collecting, organising and providing access to a great range of high quality, current information for researchers, students and members of the public, as well as preserving our cultural heritage.

Publicly funded library services have a fundamental role to play in the development of strategies for lifelong learning, as broad media competence becomes a basic skill and adult independent learners are growing in number, contributing to the knowledge economy.

Library services in the digital environment

Traditional library services, such as maintaining a central reference collection, the lending of fiction, or the provision of services to special local groups, may not appear to be very attractive to commercial suppliers. However, the new opportunities offered by ICT mean that libraries now provide a wide range of expanding services, which are of increasing interest to commercial suppliers seeking new global opportunities in the information marketplace. These services include: online database retrieval services, electronic reference services, Internet access, the development of Web portal/subject gateway services, electronic document delivery.

Publicly funded libraries provide these services from the public purse, which are provided as part of a package, in order to serve the interests of the whole community. If authorities are obliged to provide the same level of subsidy, they would be faced with two choices: reduce subsidies to existing services or less likely, extend the same level of subsidy to the competing private sector organisation.

While the concept of allowing “*competition*” appears benign, the eventual outcome of such challenges will be the undermining of the tax-supported status of public sector libraries at the national, regional and local levels. Without tax support, the library’s role as a democratic institution, making available the widest range of material reflecting the diversity of society will be

compromised and threaten the objectives of Government Social Inclusion policies.

If public funding to libraries was threatened as a result of the GATS negotiations, the result could be that only those who are able to pay for library services at commercial rates would have access to the information they need.

Publicly-funded libraries with a long historical tradition in society can adapt and prosper in response to changing needs and business models in society, for example, 24 hour reference services such as "Ask a librarian" and the People's Network. But CILIP is concerned at the potentially alarming consequences for the future operation and development of cultural and education services should the priority to preserve our cultural heritage, provide free access to information and the notion of a community-based library serving the needs of the local population cease to take priority over profit margins.

We believe these functions would be compromised if they are subject to general competition in the information marketplace for example, provision of Internet-based services, lending of audio-visual material eg. DVDs, academic Internet publishing, inter-library document supply.

Commitments should not be made that may call into question the funding and regulation of publicly funded library services, currently a statutory provision under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 for English Authorities.

CILIP strongly urges the Government to continue with its present policy not to agree to any requests to extend the sectoral coverage and/or to remove the existing restrictions in the sub-sector '*libraries, archives, museums and other cultural services.*' And, to make a commitment not to include this sub-sector in future negotiations.

CILIP would be happy to meet with colleagues at the DTI to discuss any of the above points in more detail and asks to be put on the official list of organisations consulted on the WTO GATS negotiations.

7. Information Services and the Independent Public Library

By Anders Ericson

The library system has always had to struggle for survival. Its history is characterised by changing legitimisation of its existence in relation to external requirements; from public enlightenment rooted in schools and education, through official information and local culture and on to today's alliance with archives and museums.

Librarians still retain their ideals of independence and all-round versatility, but have they perhaps fallen into a rut? Have they forgotten their ABC? Developments in public library information services over recent decades would seem to indicate that this is so.

Librarians throughout most of the world gather on solemn occasions to honour principles such as those embodied in the IFLA's Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom, recently revised in 2002. Here we can read the following:

- “Libraries have a responsibility both to guarantee and to facilitate access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity. To this end, libraries shall acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society.
- Libraries shall ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views.”
- We sometimes hear reports about breaches of freedom of information and expression or of librarians being prevented from carrying out their duties. These, however, usually concern dubious regimes far from the ‘White Man’s West’ and refer to the burning of books, the closure of libraries and other similar obvious violations.

But is it absolutely certain that we ourselves adhere seriously enough to these principles? Do library services in fact always reflect “the plurality and diversity of society”? Can we be so sure that we are never influenced by “political, moral and religious views”?

In connection with my book entitled *Videst mulig informasjon*, which translates as The widest possible information and is taken from a clause in the Norwegian Library Act, I visited a number of public libraries and their web sites in order to examine their displays, collections, web links and the presentation of their information resources.

Vague terminology

As surely as Norwegian public libraries contain books, they will also have stands or complete sections entitled *Offentlig informasjon* (Public information). In Norway this has become synonymous with government information, i.e. material published by local, regional or central authorities. Here can be found brochures, announcements, reports, agendas and case histories. In this respect Norway is an open society with a wealth of publications and data bases. The facilities available under the heading of offentlig informasjon are often almost identical from library to library with regard to content and appearance. This is partly due to the fact that libraries are granted free subscriptions to the majority of government publications but also because the Norwegian Central Information Service (Statens informasjonstjeneste, now part of Statskonsult) has distributed name plates to be used to indicate government and municipal information respectively. It should be remembered that during the 1970s and 80s the library system was incorporated into a widespread campaign for greater transparency within public administration.

In Norwegian professional library literature, including also a couple of government committee reports, there is general use of a wider concept, *samfunnsinformasjon* (community or society information). In some cases authors have emphasised the importance of libraries actively presenting *motinformasjon* (opposing information). Differing views and arguments will always exist and in many cases information from central authorities represents only the views of a political majority. However, this conflict between offentlig informasjon and samfunnsinformasjon has seldom or never been considered particularly important or worthy of debate.

The growth of the World Wide Web has brought no change. The narrow category of offentlig informasjon still remains the most common term used. Under this heading on the libraries' lists of links the only information to be found is that supplied by local authorities and government departments. This situation will only become worse as more and more libraries entrust entire responsibility for this service to the web-site *norge.no* which confines itself to information from precisely these authorities and departments.

Also Swedish and Danish public libraries use terms similar to *offentlig informasjon*.

The Swedes, however, make greater use of the wider concept *samhällsinformation* (community and society information) and increasingly classify their Web links under headings such as Health, Environment, Education, etc. which offer access not only to local and government authorities but also to various organisations and private persons. A quick

browse through British websites indicates that similar solutions are common also there.

I therefore maintain that the government campaign of the 1970s and 80s for greater openness and improved offentlig informasjon, although extremely important to the general democratic debate, led to both the 'genre' and the concept of offentlig informasjon becoming fixed and consequently exerting undue influence today on the Norwegian public library system's dissemination of information.

Of course, public libraries in Norway provide a wealth of social information in the widest sense, just as do libraries in our Scandinavian neighbouring countries and in Britain. Circumstances for literature on social problems have fluctuated over the years but all libraries offer a more or less comprehensive choice of books, periodicals, videos and other material on the social situation in Norway and in the world at large. Inter-library lending and the Internet have also enhanced the breadth and depth of these services. However, by presenting official information as a 'genre' of its own similar to fiction and non-fiction and without offering any contrary information on the same subject, librarians are in my opinion failing in their duty. An absence of conflicting views is harmful to social processes and leads to a more superficial democracy.

Self-censorship

I also maintain that public libraries and their staff together with their national professional bodies reveal an attitude towards the authorities and their information activities which is uncritical and sometimes purely subservient. When loyalty is challenged there is a tendency towards self-censorship. Furthermore, any signs of tackling these problems have been ignored by central library forums.

One example in particular demonstrates this most clearly. In August 1977 a report was published in book form dealing with the Norwegian national assembly's handling of a sensitive defence issue. This originally secret Loran C report concerned a navigational system for USA's nuclear submarines which had been established in Norwegian territorial waters in contravention of national directives. The book aroused considerable uproar but was not confiscated by the authorities and several newspapers published the contents of the report without being prosecuted. Some six months later the public library system unintentionally became the focus of the national press when a student carried out a survey among the chief librarians at the 100 largest libraries, asking whether or not they had purchased the book and the reason for their decision one way or the other. 48 libraries had chosen not to purchase the book and several of them admitted that they had been afraid of "treading on official toes".

Such exaggerated caution and self-censorship is serious enough in itself, but no less troubling is the fact that this episode led to no debate in library circles.

There was a general pretence that the incident had never occurred and thus no lessons were learned.

External legitimisation

How could these attitudes take hold and become consolidated during the radical years of the 1970s? And why have no changes taken place since then? I have already hinted that some explanation may be found in the massive national campaign for increased dissemination of official information. The public libraries gave their willing support to what was regarded as 'another leg to stand on'. The library system has always had to struggle for survival. Its history is characterised by changing legitimisation of its existence in relation to external requirements; from public enlightenment rooted in schools and education, through official information and local culture and on to today's alliance with archives and museums.

Little was done, however, to increase awareness of the strategy involved in becoming a channel for official information. The task was pretty much accepted without criticism. A partial explanation can be found in the strong priority traditionally given by the public library sector to fictional literature and the humanities to the detriment of science and social studies. If asked to consider, for example, the provision of quality literature for children, every chief librarian and child department librarian in the country would be able to present without hesitation several solid grounds for increased budgets. There exist any number of conferences and courses in this particular area and librarians themselves produce interesting and innovative articles on the subject. Nothing similar, however, takes place in the realm of social and official information.

Even when Geir Vestheim, the first Norwegian to obtain a doctorate on a library-related subject, took a closer look in 1997 at the problem of government information, there was no ensuing debate. Maybe, as Vestheim suggests, the fact is that librarians have still not yet realised that we no longer live in a static society of the pre-war type, where 'everybody' is united in the common aims of enlightenment and progress.

There may even be a semantic and psychological explanation. The fact that the term *offentlig informasjon* has so easily been assimilated may perhaps be due to the original and still valid meaning of the Scandinavian word *offentlig*, namely 'open' or 'public'. A close association is thereby created with 'freely available', a fundamental virtue in librarian circles.

A wider game

Even if the causes of our mainly domestic situation could be eliminated, it would still not be easy to put library information services on the right path. The Canadian, William F. Birdsall, feels that libraries have the odds against them. In his article *The Political Realm of the Public Library*, translated to Norwegian in Ragnar Audunson's book *Det siviliserte informasjonssamfunn* (The Civilised Information Society), Birdsall takes as his starting-point the New-Liberalism

which developed during the 1980s and which practically dominates the world today by reason of the globalisation of economies pursued by world-wide business concerns. Instead of being subordinate to political life, the economy will now take over politics. In his opinion the economic sphere “uses information technology as a tool not just to change the dynamics between the two spheres but actually to abolish the political sphere”. This applies equally to the politics of the library.

Birdsall is of the opinion that also the public libraries of the USA with their strong pragmatic tradition have been particularly adept at adjusting to swings in the political landscape, since they reflect liberalism’s conception of the individual as a rational, free agent. Admittedly, the library sector, also in the USA, has taken certain independent Little was done, however, to increase awareness of the strategy involved in becoming a channel for official information initiatives of a social character, but Birdsall considers that particular epoch to be at an end. Ragnar Audunson in his doctoral thesis makes a similar observation, noting that public libraries in Scandinavia and in Hungary during the 1980s, when the latter was under Soviet dominance, still held almost identical views of their role in the community.

In Birdsall’s opinion a market-liberal ideology of information technology now prevails. Today’s library-political declarations assume uncritically the task of attracting consumers to the information highway. Once the Clinton era had determined the library’s central position on the information highway, the only condition set by the public library sector was that general user access should retain some glimmer of democracy and equality.

In recent years it has been possible to observe a Norwegian example of something similar when certain individual libraries have assumed or have been assigned the role of offentlig servicekontor (UK: Neighbourhood Office). In these cases the question of the library’s independence and first loyalty can easily become a subject of doubt. Does their loyalty lie with the public or with the authorities, the producers of the information?

Birdsall warns against passivity and uncritical attitudes in the library sector and has come out in support of what he refers to as “the right to communicate”. This goes a step further than any demand for universal access and requires a significant contribution from the library sector in order to be attained. He recommends a strategy proposed by Karen Adams, one-time president of the Canadian Library Association, where the central point is that librarians should become active advocates “to support the critical importance of affordable, equitable and universal access to information.”

Is the trend reversible?

Only two or three generations ago the primary task of public libraries was to make available to the masses a more or less censored range of ‘pre-digested’ knowledge and information. A great deal of this information came from the authorities and often constituted some form of admonition. In 1814 Norwegian central authorities were responsible for no less than 230 of the country’s total

of 270 registered publications. Much of this can be viewed as part of the social project embarked upon two centuries ago to promote *folkeopplysning*, enlightenment of the people, which embraced everything including courses in personal hygiene, lantern lectures on expeditions to the heart of Africa as well as the development of public libraries. Although folkeopplysning has been modernised and democratised on several occasions, also by the people's own organisations, there are those today who with some justification increasingly declare it to be dead.

Nowadays it is easy to be dazzled by the enormous mass of available information and to believe that everything is so much better. Information, however, is not knowledge and knowledge is not wisdom. The new situation demands no less of public libraries than before. Everyone agrees that the library will be needed in the future to organise, to make quality judgements and to present information. Equally important, however, must be the need to view information with a critical eye and to balance opposing views against each other. In the opinion of the Norwegian sociological researcher, Ole Bjerrefjord, the public library system should first and foremost place itself on a par with critical journalism and critical research. He has touched upon an important point which the library sector should consider without further delay.

A small but practicable step to start with would be for librarians to take into use the word *samfunnsinformasjon* (social information), thereby expanding their mental horizon. Ahead of us lie more important tasks of the type envisaged by Birdsall and Adams.

Translated by Eric Deverill from Norwegian into Swedish. Translated from Norwegian into English by the author. This article was originally published by SPQL.

Part Three : Cuba, Culture and Development

8. Culture, Comrades and Castro

by John Pateman

*“One white rose I plant In June as in January For the friend that is sincere
And offers me his honest hand” (Jose Marti)*

I have just returned from a feast of cultural debate and entertainment in Havana, Cuba. I am referring to the Third International Congress of Culture and Development, held at the Havana International Conference Centre, Cuba, from 9-12 June 2003. I was invited to this congress last year by Ismael Gonzalez, Vice Minister of Culture, when he presented me with the National Culture Award. This year comrade Ismael was to do me an even greater honour inviting me onto the stage with Fidel Castro at the closing ceremony of the congress.

The congress was a forum where professionals and intellectuals from all parts of the world could meet and exchange ideas. Working together, our aim was to contribute to the future development of all people and to a more peaceful world. The congress was also an opportunity to celebrate the life and work of the Cuban National Hero Jose Marti, in the year commemorating his 150th birthday. The congress programme was complemented by an excellent cultural programme, which show cased the best of Cuban culture.

The opening event in the cultural programme was a performance by the Contemporary Dance Group of Cuba at the Mella Theatre. This included modern dances to music by Philip Glass, Dmitri Shostakovich and Duke Ellington. There was some audience participation which was great for shaking off the last of our jet lag. The opening ceremony of the congress was held in the National Theatre of Cuba in Revolution Square. This concert included dance, music and singing and featured Conjunto Folclorico (a folklore dance group) and Omara Portuondo (from the Buena Vista Social Club).

The congress programme, which was organised in 10 Forums, also included lectures, round tables, workshops and panels. I was a member of Forum 8 which looked at Libraries in the Developing World. The Forum was chaired by Eliades Acosta, who is the Director of Cuba’s National Library. Eliades is a giant in every sense of the word. He is big physically, with a full beard which gives him a passing resemblance to Fidel. And he is big intellectually, as well, with excellent analytical abilities and his interventions at the congress were both powerful and profound. Always looking for opportunities to put idea into action, Eliades lead us through the week and Forum members have pledged to stay in touch and continue our work of building solidarity with Cuban libraries.

There were two other Forums with a close relationship to libraries: Reading, Books and Literature in the Third Millennium; and Culture in the Digital Era. Other Forums included Art, Theatre, Music and National Heritage. In the afternoon there were visits to cultural institutions such as the National Museum of Fine Arts, Higher Institute of Arts, National School of Ballet, San Alejandro School of Fine Arts and the Teacher Training School of Art. The first day of the congress was taken up by a plenary session followed by the formation of the Forums. In the evening we were taken to the Amadeo Roldan Theatre for a performance by the Brazilian musician Egberto Gismonti. He played a series of pieces on classical guitar and grand piano, including *Selva Amazonica*, *Ciranda Nordestina* and *Lundu*.

The opening session of Forum 8 started with a round table discussion on Libraries and the cultural identity of Developing World peoples, with participants from Cuba, Chile and Mexico. This was followed by a debate about National Libraries: the defence and preservation of the historical legacy and the bibliographic heritage of the nation. One of the papers was about the destruction of the National Library of Iraq on 14 April 2003. We resolved to call on the international library community to mark 14 April with a series of events each year to remember this atrocity.

The afternoon session - *Libraries, reading and community* - featured some brilliant papers from Cuban librarians about the excellent social intervention work which they are engaged in. We heard about the National Reading Programme, and we met a real independent librarian (as opposed to those which are funded and supported by the US Interests Section). Agustin Marquez is a maths teacher who has a collection of books at home which he lends to his pupils to develop their love of reading. We also saw an example of children's oral story telling_

"Singing and playing" at the Julio Antonio Mella Provincial Library in Camaguey. And we were introduced to a Literary Pharmacy where prescriptions are issued recommending good books.

There were also papers on reading and the social integration of children with learning difficulties, "Journey to the Dragon's Dwelling" (promotion of reading in the community) and activities that encourage reading in the borough of Uruapan, Michoacan, Mexico. In the evening we went to the Grand Theatre of Havana to see the world famous National Ballet of Cuba. The opening piece

La Casa de Bernarda Alba (Federico Garcia Lorca) was very dark and modern; the second piece, *Canto Vital*, featured four of Cuba's best male dancers; and the final piece, *Paquita*, was very traditional with delightful costumes and solo performances.

The next session of Forum 8 discussed libraries, programmes of sustainable development and the role of libraries in the training of human resources. This was followed by a debate about libraries in the globalised world, with contributions from Mexico, Cuba, Great Britain and Venezuela. I presented a paper on libraries contribution to solidarity and social justice in a world of neo-

liberal globalisation, in which I spoke about the work of Information for Social Change and the Cuban Library Support Group.

The afternoon session *libraries and current social challenges* included contributions from Columbia (libraries, information, literacy campaigns and the culture of information), the USA (the new roles for librarians at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States) and Turkey (online academic libraries in Turkey).

The Plenary Session which followed was dominated by the announcement that the European Union was taking a series of measures against Cuba: to limit bilateral high-level government visits; to reduce the participation of member states in cultural events (which was of particular interest and concern to congress participants); to invite Cuban dissidents to national holiday celebrations; and to re-examine the European Union's Common Position on Cuba. There was a general feeling of outrage about these measures by congress members, many of whom spoke in defence of Cuba and its right to independence and sovereignty.

The cultural event that evening was a concert of Cuban music at the Amadeo Roldan Theatre, featuring the National Symphony Orchestra. The concert included *Danza de Fin de Siglo* and *Tema del Mar* (featuring Victor Rodriguez on piano) and *Fresa y Chocolate* and *Contradanza Festiva* (featuring Jose Maria Vitier on piano). A Round Table discussion on the European Union measures, lead by Fidel Castro, took place on Cuban TV that evening and protests were called for the following day outside the Spanish and Italian embassies.

Evidence of these protests was apparent the next morning when we woke up to find rows and rows of empty buses, trucks and coaches parked outside our hotel, which was near the Italian embassy. These vehicles had been used to bring in protestors and the demonstrations started at 7.30am. We joined in and waved our Cuban flags as a TV helicopter hovered above the crowd, which was a million strong. Loud speakers broadcast messages from Cuban school children and students, which included "Viva the Italian People" and "Long live the Cuban Revolution". Many protestors held placards featuring photographs of "Benito" Burlesconi and "Adolph" Aznaar (the Italian and Spanish Prime Ministers who are leading the EU measures against Cuba). The protest rally finished with a rendering of the "Internationale". This protest was a good example of how well organised and disciplined the Cuban people are to organise a demonstration of one million people within 24 hours.

Back at the congress, the topic of discussion at Forum 8 was libraries, historical memory and identity. Presentations included: The Public Libraries of Havana- a place for discovering socio-cultural identity or storehouses for books?; Greatness lies in truth the ideas of Jose Marti; Jose Suri, First Cuban poet; Bibliography of Dr Jose Rafael Rojas Bez; and Bibliographic records of Havana in the archives of the National Library of Spain. These were followed by the review and approval of the final reports of Forum 8 and the congress

as a whole, copies of which can be viewed at the Biblioteca Nacional Jose Marti website.

The final Plenary Session, chaired by Eliades Acosta, took place during a dramatic storm which flooded the conference centre and blew the lights. It was an apt metaphor for a country that is constantly battered by the storms of US and EU foreign policy. After dinner we were taken by bus to the closing ceremony of the congress at the Karl Marx theatre. We knew that Fidel Castro would be present and we were shown to our seats which were very near to the platform. Behind us the 5000 seats of the theatre filled up with an invited audience, including many Latin American students who were studying, for free, at the Latin American Medical School in Havana.

Eliades Acosta gave us radio ear pieces for simultaneous translation and returned to his seat. Several minutes later I saw him speaking to Ismael Gonzalez, the Vice Minister for Culture who had presented me with the Cuban National Award for Culture in August 2002. Eliades then came over to me and said that the Vice Minister would like me to join him on stage with Fidel Castro and other invited guests. And so I was taken back stage (the curtain was still down) and placed in a seat on the stage. I started talking to a Mexican comrade next to me, when there was some activity to our left and when I looked up I saw Fidel Castro walking towards me, dressed in a suit, and surrounded by his entourage. Fidel took his seat next to the Cuban Minister of Culture, Abel Prieto, the curtain was raised, and we all stood up while the Cuban National Anthem was played.

The closing ceremony began with a reading of the final resolution of the congress. And then Fidel took to the stage and talked about the EU measures in the context of the Cuban Revolution and the continual attempts by the Empire (the US) to overthrow it. Fidel talked about the achievements of the Revolution in terms of health, education, literacy, sport, culture and social welfare. Armed with a battery of facts and figures he poured scorn on the governments of the US and EU, while expressing solidarity with their peoples. He concluded by warning that a military attack on Cuba by the US, with or without international support, was a serious possibility.

And so my sixth visit to Cuba came to an end, crowned with the honour of sharing a stage with comrade Fidel Castro, commander of the Cuban people and the Revolution. Having visited the Museum of the Revolution at the start of my visit I could only marvel at and admire the way in which Fidel has kept the Revolution on course for 44 years. This is an incredible achievement given the constant level of foreign intervention (including the illegal US blockade) and the fostering of internal dissent (including the so-called "independent librarians"). But I left feeling that the Revolution was strong because it is rooted in the people and that the culture of Cuba is the culture of the Revolution.

9. Statement by the participants of the Culture and Development Convention

Havana, June 13 (National News Agency) Text of the Statement by the participants in the III International Convention on Culture and Development.

The pro-war leaders of Washington, embarked into the irrational quest of imposing to the XXI Century and the third millennium their empire to all the world, are continuing to carry on their project of the ENDLESS WAR.

Their campaign of destruction in Iraq, that brought the repudiation of Mankind, is not over yet and they are now aiming at new targets, the INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC OF CUBA, that they could not dominate during more than 40 years, despite having done all kinds of possible provocations.

Cuba is now in the gun sight of their escalation of negotiating the principle of sovereignty of the nations and the self determination of the peoples.

The superpower that is the aggressor, taking into account the difficulties it had with its European partners in the case of Iraq, is now imposing them to be accomplices of their new conquests, and decided to use Cuba as a trade in to go over disagreements and begin together a new colonization of all the countries that reject the old slavery dressed up with pseudo-modern clothing.

The governments of the European Union, under the power of Bush and his clique, are now obedient and submissive to the super-power.

In order to gain grace with the superpower, and participate in the loot, they approve the anti-Cuban attack, that would be the prelude of new aggressions, calculated to end up into a second Iraq.

CUBA WILL NEVER BE A SECOND IRAQ !!!

We are sure that the peoples of the Earth, that represent in its more pure form the feelings of Mankind, will go out to the streets of the five continents, as they did before during the invasion of Iraq to say in all possible tones " NO TO THE WAR , YES TO PEACE ".

There is no doubt that the decision of the European Union does not interpret the will of the peoples of that continent, linked in so many ways to the respect of the nations, as part of a universal culture and a common mankind.

The defiance against the world is of the most grave nature. The response must be immediate and massive, because what is really happening is that the future of mankind is being decided in the new millennium.

The people are anxious to be free and sovereign, and the people want to live as human beings, with dignity and respect. They will stand up and win.

Havana, 12 June 2003 Signed by Volodia Teitelboim, Thiago de Mello, Marcelino Dos Santos, Keith Ellis, Santiago García, Jaime Lozada, Raúl Pérez Torres and more than 300 intellectuals participating in the III International Convention on Culture and Development in Havana.

10. Libraries Contribution to Solidarity and Social Justice in a World of Neo-liberal Globalisation

by John Pateman

Libraries contribution to solidarity and social justice can take many forms. It could be a twinning link between two libraries. It could be the support offered by one library service to another. It could be via a professional organisation. In my view, a library, library service or library organisation can be assessed by the degree to which it addresses issues of solidarity and social justice. A library, library service or organisation which has issues of solidarity and social justice at its heart (and not at the margins) is likely to be a progressive and radical organisation. Official organisations in capitalist countries rarely take on these characteristics. They are more concerned with domestic issues and maintaining the status quo. This leads to the development of quasi official organisations, which take on the role of providing solidarity and social justice. I would like to illustrate my paper with two examples of these organisations from the UK: Information for Social Change and the Cuban Library Support Group.

Information for Social Change

ISC grew from international activity between progressive librarians in the UK and comrades in Africa. From its inception ISC has taken an internationalist outlook and many articles in "Information for Social Change" feature library developments outside the UK. The founding members of ISC were actively involved with Operation Namibia and the Library and Information Workers Organisation of South Africa.

ISC was formed in 1994 at a time when the Conservative government had been in power for fifteen years. The climate was not ripe for founding a progressive and radical organisation. The labour movement was under attack, workers rights had been removed and several powerful trade unions, including the miners and printers, had been crushed. Debate was stifled. Greed and individualism were encouraged. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said "Greed is good" and "There is no such thing as society". These attitudes, which blighted a whole generation, affected the world of libraries and information. Libraries were no longer a common or public good. Their continued existence now had to be justified and they were encouraged to become economic, efficient and effective. They were not subject to Compulsory Competitive Tendering (a device to shift public services into the private sector) but they were encouraged to become more businesslike. Fees and charges were introduced or increased. This happened against the backdrop of the Reagan/Thatcher alliance which saw rampant capitalism at home and aggressive imperialism abroad.

ISC set out to challenge these paradigms and to provide an outlet for views which were not covered by the mainstream professional press. The opening statement of the first issue of ISC (ISC, No.1, Winter 1994) was: "It is a truism to say that information in all its forms is now a commodity, to be packaged and sold, along with all the other products of our age, in the high street superstores. As this commodification increases, so it is increasingly easy to forget that information has value far beyond the commercial world. It has a value as an agent for social change, for development, as it introduces people to ideas, creates forums for debate and

speaks of the possibilities that are open to us were we only permitted to know of them.”

Since that first issue we have produced a further 15 issues. Some issues of ISC have been on a theme: social class (ISC, No. 10, Winter 1999); race and ethnic diversity (ISC, No.11, Summer 2000); and sexuality (ISC No. 12, Winter 2000). But our most ambitious and successful issue has been that on Globalisation and Information (ISC No.14, Winter 2001). This issue was produced and edited by Ruth Rikowski, who is an expert on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and its impact on library and information services.

The subject of globalisation has been continued in the last three issues of ISC and has become a permanent theme. I have bought some hard copies of ISC to this conference, and you can access full text versions via our website at www.libr.org/ISC/. As from our latest issue (ISC No. 17, Summer 2003), ISC is to become an electronic journal and no further hard copies will be produced. But hard copies can be downloaded and printed from the website. Our next issue of ISC (No. 18, January 2004) will include a report back and papers from this conference.

ISC has held conferences with our sister organisation, Link, a network for North-South Library Development. Our first conference, “Better Read than Dead” (1996) looked at the achievements of libraries in the Socialist countries of Cuba, China, North Korea and Vietnam. Our second conference, “Libraries and Social and Political Exclusion” (1999) examined issues of exclusion from an international perspective, with reference to case studies in Chile, Tanzania and Russia.

ISC is part of an international network of progressive library and information organisations. In particular, we work very closely with the Progressive Librarians Guild (USA) and BIS (Sweden). In 2001 ISC submitted a statement to the American Library Association (ALA) International Relations Committee and to ALA Council on the issue of the so-called “independent libraries movement” in Cuba. The ISC position is that these are neither “independent” or “libraries” and that they are part of the US government’s continual attempt to undermine and destabilise Cuba’s political, economic and social systems.

Cuban Libraries Support Group

The Cuban Libraries Support Group (CLSG) was established in July 1999 to support: Cuban libraries, librarians, library and information workers and the Cuban Library Association (ASCUBI); Cuba’s free and comprehensive education system and high literacy levels; the Cuban people’s right to self determination and to choose the social, political and economic systems which support their library service.

CLSG works in partnership with a number of organisations including Book Aid International, the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, Link, Information for Social Change, the Progressive Librarians Guild, BIS and the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association.

CLSG activities include: working with partners and other agencies to disseminate information about the Cuban library system; producing articles for publication and arranging meetings to discuss the Cuban education and library systems; supporting the Cuban National Programme for the Development of Reading; and organising study tours to Cuba to visit libraries and meet with Cuban librarians and library and

information workers. The first of these study tours is planned for February 2004 to coincide with the Havana Book Fair. They are being organised in partnership with the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and Capitolio Travel Ltd.

CLSG responded to the report on Cuban libraries produced by the intellectual freedom committee (FAIFE) of IFLA in 1999. Much of the mis-information in this report was supplied by Robert Kent and the so-called "Friends of Cuban Libraries". This group is, in fact, funded by the US government. The group leader, Robert Kent, has taken books and pamphlets to Cuba for Freedom House and the Centre for a Free Cuba, both of which are funded by the US Agency for International Development. On three occasions his travel expenses were paid by Freedom House or the Centre for a Free Cuba.

CLSG has placed letters and articles in the professional press, the "Morning Star" daily newspaper, and "Cuba Si" (journal of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign) countering the lies and propaganda being circulated by Robert Kent. In April 2000 members of CLSG visited a so-called "independent library" in Havana and exposed it as a front for counter revolutionary activity. CLSG issued a discussion paper about this visit, along with articles by Rhonda L. Neugebauer (Cuban Libraries: challenges and achievements) and Larry R. Oberg (Cuba Today, tomorrow, forever).

Robert Kent continues to spread his propaganda and lies, despite the fact that his arguments have been rejected by IFLA and the ALA, both of whom have signed cooperation agreements with the Cuban Library Association. Despite this, the IFLA Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression produced a media release on Intellectual Freedom in Cuba on 8 May 2003: "Once again, IFLA urges the Cuban government to eliminate obstacles to access to information imposed by its policies", said the Chair of the IFLA/FAIFE Committee Mr Alex Byrne.

CLSG responded to this statement by pointing out that the biggest "obstacle to access to information", and access to many other goods and services, was the illegal US blockade of Cuba. CLSG also circulated a briefing paper giving "background information pertaining to recent events in Cuba". This was with regard to the 65 so-called "dissidents", including some "independent librarians" who were arrested, tried and imprisoned in April 2003. They were charged and convicted of conducting "mercenary activity in the pay of a foreign enemy power". They were found guilty of receiving sustained financial assistance, gifts and equipment and of having been recruited by the head of the US Interests Section in Havana, James Cason, to carry out counter-revolutionary activities.

CLSG continues to campaign against the US blockade of Cuba and for the release of the five Cuban patriots who have been imprisoned in America for exposing the US terrorist threat to Cuba. CLSG also seeks to influence UK and European Union policy on Cuba, on issues such as Cuba's application to join the Cotonou Agreement regulating economic cooperation relations between the EU and the 79 countries that make up the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP). Cuba withdrew their application to join when Spain and Britain attempted to establish additional and discriminatory requirements for Cuba.

Even as I put the finishing touches to this paper (5 June 2003), I have just received a "press release" by email from Robert Kent headed "Nat Hentoff Blasts ALA Persecution of Librarians in Cuba". And so the constant struggle goes on to defend and develop the Cuban library system and the Cuban Revolution.

11. An Open Letter to the Librarians of the World

by ASCUBI

Havana, April, 2003

Esteemed Colleagues,

Once again the extreme right in the United States, in collusion with the Cuban exile community in Miami, is stepping up its pressure on the Cuban people, much as it has done since the beginning of our revolution in 1959.

Among the methods being used by these people to attack and pressure our country are distortion, subjective interpretation, and crude manipulation of the events that are currently taking place in Cuba.

We appeal to you as information professionals and colleagues whose job it is to provide information to readers and library users to make, insofar as you can, the following facts known to your public:

* The people who have been detained and sentenced in Cuba over the past few weeks were paid by different United States government sources through the U. S. Interest Section in Havana, which officially represents the United States government in Cuba. All of this has been made public in a press conference held by Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque. (See: 222.cubaminrex.cu, Granma 19 April 2003.)

* No Cuban librarian, no graduate of any of our Cuban library schools, nor any librarian or paraprofessional who currently or ever has worked in the Cuban library and information system has been detained.

We emphasize here only those matters that link librarians with the problems we are denouncing. At the same time, there are many other questions that threaten and worry us as librarians, indeed, as they do all Cubans, such as:

- The tightening of the political and economic blockade the United States government has imposed against our people for the past forty years.
- The imprisonment of five Cuban patriots who have been unjustly condemned to extreme prison sentences in the United States.
- The United States government's announced policy of attacking militarily any obscure corner of the world, depending on what best fits its own interests.

In these times of pre-emptive wars such actions become even more dangerous than they have been over the past forty years of terrorist attempts and invasion threats to which our country has been subjected and against which we have victoriously resisted.

The world's librarians have already seen how the National Library of Iraq has been looted and destroyed. At the same time, we note how few voices have been raised to denounce and condemn these unfortunate acts.

Finally, we declare our solidarity with the struggle of librarians in the United States against the restrictive regulations imposed upon library patrons [i.e., the USA Patriot Act] under the pretext of the fight against terrorism.

The Cuban Library Association (ASCUBI), which has members in libraries in all provinces of our country, awaits the solidarity and understanding of our colleagues in the rest of the world.

Cuban Library Association (Asociacion Cubana de Bibliotecarios; ASCUBI).

Part Four : Any Other Business

12. Reviews

Capitalism is dead: peoplism rules: creating success out of corporate chaos, Alec Reed, McGraw-Hill, 2003, ISBN 0-07-710369-6

Reviewed by Keith Nockels

Alec Reed is the man behind the Reed Executive plc group. He has coined the term 'peoplism' to describe the current model of the economy, which he argues has replaced capitalism. Reed argues that land and capital are now of limited importance and that the most important drivers of value creation are the enterprise and creativity of individuals.

The title begs a question: is capitalism dead? I am not sure it is. "Peoplism" does seem a useful model, but perhaps it co-exists alongside capitalism.

Reed maps out the current state of society: incomes are up, citizens have more power, world poverty will be halved by 2015 (I think this was a Department for International Development aim rather than anyone's prediction as Reed suggests, but the rather cursory reference makes it difficult to trace. All the references are rather cursory). Relationships of security are changing, with the church and community dissolving. My blood pressure rose when I saw asylum seekers and refugees described as a 'problem' (p. xxvi), and fluctuated rather when on the next page the argument is advanced that people with the skills to succeed can thrive regardless of their country of domicile (p. xxvii). However, read on to page 31 where there are interesting things said about the way we treat refugees and immigrants in this country while at the same time poaching trained staff from other places overseas to fill our skills shortages, thus depleting others' human resource. I am intrigued by the idea (p. xxix) that scientific knowledge will be doubling every 73 days by 2020. There is no reference to this, but it will mean that I need more staff!

In the chapters which follow, Reed writes about the implications of this peoplism for business. I began to warm to the book when I read (p. 12) that peoplism was not necessarily any more amenable than capitalism. I had worried up to this point that it was being presented as a better alternative.

Reed argues that individuals are now 'naked', Government cannot provide for the diversity of choice that people expect. (Plenty of people have no choice, of course, and you could argue that too much choice at the expense of others is no choice, but Reed does not seem to take this line). Companies offer pensions and health insurance in the way that they used to offer tied houses, and they will offer peer groups and the sort of support that the state might once have provided. Reed has read somewhere that the NHS accidentally kills 20000 people a year, but there is no reference to where he read it, and no indication of how choice might help you here.

Chapter 2, on disconnected thinking, argues that product lives are getting shorter, and so are attention spans. 50 percent of people apparently don't look beyond the first page of search results (p. 19, and no reference), and will wait only 8 seconds for a website to download before they get fed up and move on (same page, cursory reference). Do my users do this? If Medline does not appear within 8 seconds, where do they go? If the key paper is on the second page, do they miss it? We should be educating against this lack of patience.

In this chapter Reed argues that in rewarding sales, in perpetuating gender and age inequalities, and in having lots of overseas students who don't stay, we can see this disconnected thinking. I found this all very interesting, and wholeheartedly agree with the arguments on gender and age bias. Surely, though, there is a role for higher education in promoting a widening of everyone's cultural horizons. Of course my University would be financially poorer if it did not have so many students from outside the UK (or even outside Scotland!), but it would be culturally much poorer, and the students who did come would miss the benefits of being in such a diverse community.

Reed then looks at management structures, arguing that the wrong structure can make a dysfunctional organisation. He then looks at corporate social responsibility, the role of HR and accountants (interesting ideas on what counts as an asset), and of communications in dealing with the advent of peoplism. I liked very much his comment (p.153) that the Internet must be used to augment and improve rather than eclipse the traditional business model.

In the final chapter, we see a vision of the future (headed with a warning that it is frightening). If we do all end up with a citizens' account, to which are charged all the services we use that were previously the preserve of the state, and from which are taken payments once we reach the limit where tax starts, then I am worried. What happened to the idea that we all help each other by paying tax to provide services for everyone, even to groups to which we do not belong? But I rather liked the idea that a tax on GDP would help redistribute wealth to more developing parts of the world.

This is an interesting book. I did not like the referencing style, and some of the arguments, particularly in the early part of the book, annoyed me. But there is a lot to think about here and it is good to read a business book which raises an eyebrow at the big pay-offs made to big bosses who make big mistakes. If peoplism has really arrived and society is really like this, then users of 'my' library might be like this too, and may have the same expectations of us as they do of their supermarket, whether I like it or not. I also liked reading about familiar examples, as most of the examples are from British business (there go my cultural horizons!).

I am off to develop a badge (see chapter 3) to emphasise the distinctiveness of my service, and to create a management dashboard (see chapter 6) to

record the key indicators that matter to my 'business'. I don't want to be a business, but there is a lot in this book to stimulate the mind.

Developing a Needs Based Library Service, John Pateman, Lifelines 13, NIACE, 2003, ISBN 1862011834

Attempts have been made to modernise public libraries without real success. What they require is a radical transformation of strategy, structure and culture to meet the needs of their diverse communities. Offering a synthesis of skills, experience and knowledge, research and cutting-edge good practice, this indispensable guide offers a step-by-step approach to creating a fully inclusive public library service. Drawing on current government thinking and extensive research, this guide will help you to put the needs of your community at the very centre of your public library service.

This is one of the latest titles (number 13) in the NIACE Lifelines in adult learning series. This series provides straightforward information, accessible advice and useful examples of good practice for all practitioners involved in adult and community learning. Focusing in turn on different areas of adult learning, these guides are an essential part of every practitioner's tool kit.

- Community education and neighbourhood renewal - Jane Thompson
- Spreading the word: reaching out to new learners - Veronica McGivney
- Managing community projects for change - Jan Eldred
- Engaging black learners in adult and community education - Lenford White
- Consulting adults - Chris Jude
- Working with young adults - Carol Jackson
- Promoting learning - Kate Malone
- Evaluating community projects - Jane Field
- Working in Partnership - Lyn Tett
- Working with Asian Heritage Communities - David McNulty
- Learning and community arts - Jane Thompson
- Museums and community learning - Garrick Fincham
- Developing a needs based library service - John Pateman
- Volunteering and volunteers - Jan Eldred

- Sustaining projects for success - Kay Snowdon
- Opening up schools for adults - Judith Summers

Political Affairs

This Journal of Marxist thought “reflects our evolving views on ideology, politics and culture and the need to engage others in a broad critical discussion of the burning theoretical and practical issues of our day. Such a debate can only lead to a deeper understanding and common action.”

This issue (November 2003) contains an interview with Walter Moseley and an article about the US Communist Party archives by Mark Rosenzweig (of the Progressive Librarians Guild). There is also an interview with Robert Meeropol, son of executed communists Ethel and Julius Rosenberg.

This excellent journal contains many book reviews of fiction, biography/memoirs, labour and class struggle, fighting racism, war and the international scene, struggle for democracy and Marxism: Theory and Practice.

Copies can be obtained from 235 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10011, Phone 212-989-4994, fax 212-229-1713 or email pa@politicalaffairs.net

5. Resources

Serving the Needs of Information Professionals

Chandos Publishing, based in Oxford, UK, has launched a new list of books for librarians and information professionals.

The books are written by leading authors from Europe and the USA. In addition to drawing on a number of academic librarians, corporate and government information professionals have contributed to the list as well.

The first eleven titles were published in 2003 and this will be followed in 2004 with another 15 titles. According to Chandos' founder, Dr. Glyn Jones, "We developed The Chandos Series because libraries are in such a state of rapid change and libraries must keep up-to-date with new developments. One of the main challenges facing librarians is the use and application of new technologies for gathering and disseminating information."

Key themes in the series include:

- The fundamental role of how libraries operate,
- The impact and application of new technologies,
- How libraries work with users and how they market their services.

According to Dr Jones, "A vital element of all of this is the role of the librarian him/herself. This is reflected in the fact that librarians are now frequently referred to as Information Professionals to reflect their new roles and responsibilities." The first titles that are available are:

- A Librarian's Guide to the Internet: A Guide to Searching and Evaluating Information
- Setting Up a New Library and Information Service
- The Role of the Academic Librarian
- Finding Legal Information: A Guide to Print and Electronic Sources
- The Role of the Legal Information Officer
- Using the Internet for Political Research
- Digital Dilemmas and Solutions for Today's Librarians
- The Strategic Management of Technology in Libraries
- Cataloguing Without Tears
- Knowledge Management: Cultivating Knowledge Professionals
- The Digital Age and Local Studies

The new Series aims to provide up-to-date, easy-to-read and, most importantly, practical information relating to modern libraries. Each of the books is written by a leading international authority and is written from a management, technical or legal perspective.

For more information on the Series please contact Hannah Grace-Williams at Chandos Publishing. Phone: +44 (0) 1865 884447, Fax +44 (0) 1865 884448. E-mail: info@chandospublishing.com. Website: www.library-chandospublishing.com

Ruth Rikowski (who is also on the editorial board of ISC) is the 'Series Editor' for the Chandos Series for Information Professionals and if anyone is interested in writing a book they can contact her at rikowski@tiscali.co.uk or rikowski.uk@tinyworld.co.uk.
AK Distribution 2004 Catalogue

AK Distribution is a workers co-operative wholly owned by its members. AK Press is the publishing arm of AK and all current titles are listed in this catalogue. The AK Press ISBN prefix numbers are 1873176 and 1902593. Apart from containing all of the AK titles currently in print, this very useful and well produced catalogue also lists local radical and independent bookstores which carry AK Press titles and other stock contained within this catalogue. Visit their website at www.akuk.com.

Labour Against the War

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[:www.labouragainsthewar.org.uk](http://www.labouragainsthewar.org.uk).

Labour Against the War :

- unequivocally condemns the terrorist outrages in the US on September 11th as a violation of human rights and an attack on working people of many races
- believes that military action in response to the events of 11th September 2002 will neither eradicate the threat of terrorism nor create a stable international framework in which the rule of law will be observed. UK support for war is not in our name.
- calls on the British government to oppose a military response to the events of September 11th, to seek other methods, including diplomatic and political, to bring the alleged perpetrators of terrorism to justice, and bring real humanitarian aid to the people of the world
- is totally opposed to any military attack on Iraq
- opposes any clampdown on civil liberties and asylum seekers on the pretext that this is required by the current situation and will stand up for civil rights in an open, democratic society. We shall oppose racist scapegoating of the Muslim community.
- will work with the Labour Party and Trade Union movement to promote these aims throughout the labour movement, stating our case to the wider public and supporting the Stop the War Coalition in a determined quest for justice, not vengeance.

Use your Loaf

Centre for Social Solidarity 227 Deptford High Street London, SE8 07984 588807

Use Your Loaf Centre for Social Solidarity was set up in summer 2002 in an old bakery at the east end of Deptford High Street. They work from an anarchist basis but are trying to set up links with the local community and to make their resources available for any non-authoritarian non-profit making activities and events. Their resources include meeting and office space, a fully equipped kitchen for catering for up to 40 people, a radical bookshop, infoshop and library, Macs, PCs and printers and facilities for showing videos.

A space in Use Your Loaf is currently being developed into a library / archive / reading room, available for people to come and peruse anarchist, communist and radical newspapers, books, magazines, and pamphlets. Anyone out there who has spare books, old or current political newspapers and leaflets, etc to give or old books they want to clear out, give them a call - Ring the hotline on 07984 588807 or email mudlark@macunlimited.net