



International Cooperation

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION is a deeply ingrained tradition among librarians in this country. In 1877, less than a year after the American Library Association was formed, sixteen Americans journeyed to London to help in the establishment of the Library Association of the United Kingdom (now The Library Association) and in 1893, the first so-called "World Congress of Librarians" was held in connection with the Chicago Conference and the Columbian Exposition.¹

The war years and the decade following V-J Day have witnessed an expansion of international activity on the part of American librarians that is probably without precedent. Early impetus was gained from such undertakings as the establishment in 1942 of the Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin in Mexico City, with A.L.A. assuming responsibility and funds provided by the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. The extension of American libraries throughout the free world continued under the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and the Office of War Information during the war years, later by the State Department, and now by the United States Information Agency. Today, aided by the Smith-Mundt Act, the Fulbright program, Unesco, and foundation grants, American librarians are playing an active, constructive role in promoting international understanding and the best practices in librarianship as never before in the history of their profession.

This activity stems from the initiative of individuals and individual libraries, and much of it originates with, or is stimulated by, national library associations. This article deals with association activities for the United States and the British Commonwealth, and will be confined to that area, with principal emphasis upon the post-war period.

Inasmuch as the A.L.A. is the largest and most inclusive of the professional library associations in this country and was the pioneer in the field, it is only logical that its international activities should be examined at the outset. The association's international relations pro-

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International Cooperation

gram is centered under the International Relations Board, established in June 1942, although a number of activities are carried out by the various divisions of A.L.A. During the period, 1943-1948, an International Relations Office² was maintained in Washington as a secretariat for the International Relations Board. Supported mainly by Rockefeller grants which expired in 1948, the office had to be discontinued in August 1949 although its services were invaluable to the library profession throughout the world. The A.L.A. Washington office, operated on a restricted basis between the summer of 1949 and February 1950, was placed on a regular basis again beginning in 1950, financed by donations.

In 1946, the International Relations Board, working with the A.L.A. Board on Resources of American Libraries, discussed the interest of librarians in the free exchange of cultural, scientific, and educational information at a Princeton conference.³ The pooling of knowledge and method and the free discussion at this conference helped to turn the attention of library associations and libraries from war relief methods to the long term acquisition needs of libraries throughout the world.

The International Relations Board works closely with agencies of the United States government and with intergovernmental agencies in order to carry out programs of exchange of persons and materials. Foundations and other private agencies which are endeavoring to assist and co-ordinate the work of libraries and librarians turn to the board for assistance and provide funds for the work of the board. The list of activities during the years is impressive.⁴ Currently, for instance, the board continues to advise the library school faculty at Keio University, Tokyo. The school was established in 1951 with funds from the United States Army; now the Rockefeller Foundation is assisting in its maintenance. Within a short time, the school will be self-sufficient with its own faculty and American faculty members will leave. Another library school has been established at the University of Ankara, Turkey, through the efforts of the board. Discussions held in the summer of 1954 with Turkish government officials and with the Ford Foundation have led to a grant of money from the foundation and the start of the school. Overall planning has been in the hands of a committee made up of the immediate past-president of the A.L.A., the chairman of the International Relations Board, and the chairman of the Board of Education for Librarianship.

Exchange of librarians has long been an interest of the International Relations Board. Contracts with such agencies as the State Department and the United States Information Agency have enabled many

librarians from other countries to visit the United States. The India Wheat Loan funds will soon, it is planned, enable a group of Indian University librarians to come to this country for approximately six months of special library school courses and internships in appropriate libraries. Another program is underway to bring a group of public librarians from various countries to this country for a similar program.

Technical library materials are difficult to find in other countries and the International Relations Board is responsible for granting translation rights and approving translation manuscripts for A.L.A. publications. The board continues to be active in the gift coupon program of Unesco and has cooperated in a Carnegie-U.S. Book Exchange program for developing libraries for technical colleges in British Africa.

The A.L.A., through its various divisions, is presently engaged in a variety of other international activities for which the International Relations Board serves as a co-ordinating body. The Division of Cataloging and Classification, for example, is working for the international acceptance of a few basic principles of cataloging, as contrasted to the development of a standardized cataloging code. The Children's Library Association has compiled a list of foreign children's books available in the United States; has helped to sponsor a travelling exhibit of foreign children's books and paintings, circulated through Smithsonian channels; and is continuing to co-operate with the Care children's program and the International Youth Library in Munich. Other divisions and the A.L.A. as a whole are working directly with the International Federation of Library Associations, (I.F.L.A.) the International Federation for Documentation (F.I.D.), and Unesco.

The Association of Research Libraries, affiliated with A.L.A., continues its activities in relation to the Farmington Plan,⁵ developed in 1942 from numerous proposals made frequently in the past, for ensuring that at least one copy of every important foreign book of scholarly value will be imported for each of the U.S. libraries co-operating in the program. The Association of Research Libraries among its other activities has continued its efforts to ease consular invoices regarding library materials, and is active in the Bibliography Committee of A.L.A. which works closely with Unesco.

The Special Libraries Association also is active in the international field. It is a member of the I.F.L.A. and works closely with Aslib, the Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux, of Great Britain. The Special Library Association has helped to establish a special libraries association in Japan; has sponsored a survey⁶ of study facilities for foreign library students in this country; and is engaged in

International Cooperation

efforts to promote an overseas exchange of librarians. It also mails a bulletin to 700 foreign librarians yearly and operates a correspondence plan between its members and overseas librarians for the exchange of specialized information.

The Medical Library Association, also a member of I.F.L.A., is concerned with exchange relations overseas and with the establishment of fellowship awards. It co-operates with the United States Book Exchange in sending lists of medical books to other countries and was represented at the First International Congress of Medical Librarianship,⁷ held in London in 1953, in which 32 nations participated. The question of adequate professional training and education for medical librarians was one of the principal matters considered by the congress.

The American Documentation Institute,⁸ has existed for more than a decade as an active operating entity in the field of documentation, interested in the assembling, classifying, preservation, reproduction, and distribution of documents in all fields of human activity. This interest extends throughout the world, for a standing committee on international relations supervises the relationships with the International Federation for Documentation. Affiliated since 1947, an American is currently treasurer of the international organization.

The Music Library Association is a very active member of the International Association of Music Libraries. Stimulated by Unesco, the American group is co-operating, among other activities, in the preparation of an international inventory of musical sources. The chairman for the Fourth Congress of Music Librarians to be held in Brussels, September 11-18, 1955, is R. S. Hill.

The Society of American Archivists participated in the International Congress on Archives at Scheveningen, Holland, in 1953, and is active in promoting a guide to international archives, as well as in exploring the possibility of preparing a universal bibliography on archival administration. The society and its overseas colleagues also are concerned with matters of uniform terminology, training, the interloaning of archival materials and the preservation and reproduction of such materials.

Most of the country's principal national library associations are affiliated with the Council of National Library Associations, which functions as a clearinghouse and as a catalyst for plans and programs rather than as a closely knit organization. The Council of National Library Associations originally sponsored the American Book Center which, during the war years, distributed 3,660,000 items to forty-five countries. The center is now the U.S. Book Exchange, a private non-

profit organization sponsored by national learned societies and library associations, which serves as a co-operative clearinghouse for the national and international exchange of publications. Approximately 450 American and 150 overseas libraries, embracing forty-five nations, currently are participants in the United States Book Exchange program. The Council of National Library Associations sponsors⁹ Committee Z-39, a committee of the American Standards Association interested in standards in library practice and documentation. Z-39 is the United States counterpart of Technical Committee 46 of the International Standards Organization. Members of the committee include library groups, publishing groups, and printing and binding interests. The Council of National Library Associations also works closely with PH-5, another committee of the American Standards Association, which deals with standards of photographic reproduction.

As the records are examined, it is obvious that the national library associations of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth are carrying out internationally many of the same activities as American associations. There is a strong tie with international library associations and with the library operations of Unesco. There is also a close fellowship between the Commonwealth library associations and the "home" association. All visitors from abroad, and especially those from the Commonwealth, quickly find Chaucer House, the London headquarters of the Library Association.

The Library Association, established in 1877, has set the pattern for many of the newer associations throughout the Commonwealth. International interlibrary interloan has been stimulated; bibliographical problems have been handled; technical advisors have been sent to underdeveloped areas, and through various auspices, to libraries in the Commonwealth. For instance, the visit of Lionel McColvin to Australia at the time of the reorganization of the library association there was a great stimulant to the librarians struggling with the many problems involved. The Manchester seminar for librarians, held in 1948 under the auspices of Unesco with active participation by the Library Association, stirred much international activity.

There are other national library associations, of course, in the United Kingdom which are becoming increasingly active but, in the international field, the work of the Association of Special Libraries Information Bureaux (Aslib),¹⁰ is particularly effective. Since 1951, when Aslib was able to become the British member, there has been an intensified interest in international activities. Constitutional reorganization of the F.I.D. and the need to redefine its philosophy have occupied much of

International Cooperation

the time of the British members but they have also been able to act as British agents in the compilation of the *Manual on Document Reproduction and Selection*, and are working currently on the "Science and Technology" part of *Index Bibliographicus*. Members of Aslib are discovering that international activity may be a national boon, for the resolution adopted by the International Library Committee at Rome in September 1951 has made them re-examine the local problem of education for librarianship; and the association is discussing with the Library Association the possibility of a joint syllabus.

The Library Association of Australia, formerly the Australian Institute of Librarians, founded in 1937, is a participant in an interesting plan: ¹¹ the Colombo Plan for co-operative economic development in South and Southeast Asia. This plan has provided an opportunity for the training of librarians from that area. Originally proposed to the Unesco Committee for Libraries, and carried out by the Commonwealth Office of Education of Australia in co-operation with the Library Association, a plan was proposed for a number of librarians to go to Australia for a three month period of training consisting of approximately ten days of lectures at the beginning and end with the opportunity to work and study in appropriate libraries in the intervening period. Participants came from India, the Philippines, and Indonesia. In addition, fellowships have been offered to other librarians to come individually to Australia for study and observation as a part of the plan which is aiming to raise living standards through planned cooperation on the part of the British Commonwealth and countries of South and Southeast Asia.

In addition to this important activity, the Australian association is a member of the I.F.L.A.; works with the International Standards Organization; is actively represented on Unesco matters through a local Unesco group which has the Library Association's desires clearly outlined; and through the United States Educational Foundation, is able to bring American librarians to lecture, teach, and carry on research in Australia. The British Dominions Fund of the Carnegie Corporation of New York has made it possible for a number of members of the Library Association to visit England and the United States in order to strengthen international ties and to help in the development of libraries in Australia. This opportunity is given also to New Zealand librarians.

New Zealand, even more isolated, is engaged in vital local programs which demand the full energy of the members of its library association. However, the association joins in such activities as the celebration of

United Nations Week and Children's Book Week and the members are aware of activities in other parts of the world through the exchange of librarians and materials.

South Africa is active in the F.I.D. and has worked on standardization. As in the case of Australia and New Zealand, exchange of librarians has been helpful. The bibliographical sub-committee, keeping in mind that the Union of South Africa is only a part of a far wider area of regional activity, has undertaken to establish liaison with bibliographical correspondents in each of the principal countries south of the Sahara. The South African Library Association also was represented at the First International Congress on Medical Librarianship.

The Canadian Library Association actively co-operates with the A.L.A. with which it is affiliated. It is also a member of the I.F.L.A. and works actively with Unesco projects.

In the South Asia area, the Pakistan library association is only a few years old but is alive to opportunities in the international field. Librarians in Ceylon are beginning to think in terms of international co-operation, spurred by the Colombo Plan and its related library activities.

India has long been active internationally, especially in the fields of bibliography, standardization and classification. An Indian Library Association is firmly established and works closely with the Unesco Science Co-operation office for South Asia on the production of a union catalogue of periodical publications in the libraries of that area. An all-India Library Conference at Indore in 1951 recommended the formation of an Asian Federation of Libraries. A project which is being watched by all countries is the Delhi Public Library, started through Unesco interest. A seminar on public library development in South Asia will be held in the library in 1955.

Of necessity, international bodies such as the I.F.L.A., F.I.D., and Unesco have been mentioned in connection with the activities of the various national library associations. Inasmuch as important segments of international library programs center around these organizations, it is appropriate that they should be considered at this juncture. Probably the most important single factor in international library relations today is Unesco¹² which, despite its wide scope and limited funds, is a potent catalyst for library progress and an initiator of programs whose long range contributions promise to be substantial. In the library field, Unesco functions through the governments which comprise it, working both directly and through international bodies such as the I.F.L.A. and F.I.D. While it is interested in matters affecting all of its member

International Cooperation

nations, Unesco's principal concern is with countries whose library services are comparatively under-developed.

Unesco's library program has taken several principal forms. Over the past several years, it has sponsored seminars in Manchester, England; Malmö, Sweden; Sao Paulo, Brazil; and Ibadan, Nigeria for the purpose of discussing common problems and interchanging information regarding best professional practice. A closely allied activity has been the establishment of demonstration libraries, of which the one at Delhi was the first. The organization also sponsors fellowships whereby qualified librarians are sent to under-developed countries to provide technical assistance in the initiation of programs and to counsel with regard to specialized matters.

In addition, Unesco has published technical library tools; has played a leading role in initiating programs designed to develop and improve national bibliographies; and has sponsored an international conference on microfilm readers. Unesco is the originator of the book coupon scheme designed to circumvent international currency barriers to the movement of publications and it has played an important role in the development of an international agreement regarding the importation of educational, scientific, and cultural materials which went into force in 1952 and is applied today by 17 nations.

Of the international bodies, the I.F.L.A. is essentially a body of professional librarians joined nationally through their respective library associations and concerned primarily with libraries. The A.L.A., the Special Library Association and the Medical Library Association are members of this body which meets annually as a council and which also attempts to hold periodic world conferences. Before World War II, congresses were held in Spain and Italy. However, since the war the I.F.L.A. has been able to hold only council meetings,^{13, 14} the last of these at Zagreb, Yugoslavia, in 1954. The federation has established two new sections—one for learned libraries and the other for public libraries—a move which may stimulate increased activities in these areas. The I.F.L.A., also attempts to promote improved library techniques. It has developed rules for international loan and is interested in library education, statistics, periodicals and serial publications, as well as in hospital libraries, and the exchange of publications. During the past five years the federation has intensified its work and today is attempting to co-operate more actively with other international associations.

The F.I.D.¹⁵ includes libraries and library associations in its membership, but it is comprised also of others who are interested in docu-

mentation and who have scientific and industrial interests. For a number of years, the F.I.D.'s main emphasis has been upon the development of the Universal Decimal Classification, the copyright for which is owned by the F.I.D. It is now publishing the *Directory of Microfilm and Photo-copying Service* and a *Guide to Document Reproduction and Selection*. Americans are among the officers of both I.F.L.A. and F.I.D. D. W. Bryant serves as first vice-president of the former, and M. O. Lee, of Washington, as treasurer of the latter organization.

The International Association of Music Libraries is the latest addition to the list of organizations by which national library associations are being brought together for joint effort. The association currently is engaged in preparing an international inventory of musical sources and is working on a basic design for an international periodical index. The association also is developing an international code for the cataloging of musical materials. The first section, a history of music cataloging, is virtually completed and a second section, a preliminary code restricted to the main principles in the field, is taking form rapidly. The third and final section will be a comprehensive international code for music cataloging.

What could become the point of departure for a new major step forward in international library co-operation will occur in Brussels, September 11-18, 1955, when an International Congress of Libraries and Documentation Centers will bring the I.F.L.A., the F.I.D., and the International Association of Music Libraries together in joint sessions. Deliberations of the Congress will center principally around common problems involving bibliography, the international flow of materials, the use of materials in countries that seek assistance, standardization, and education for librarianship. The Brussels Congress^{16, 17} is the culmination of eight years of evolution and what it will accomplish will depend chiefly on the courage and dynamism of the participants who, if they choose, could use the Congress to plan a more effective international scheme of inter-library co-operation. It is to be hoped that this will be one of the by-products of the Congress; if not immediately, then in the long run.

Several reasonably clear-cut trends emerge from an examination of the international activities of American and British Commonwealth national library associations, working of themselves or through international co-ordinating bodies. One such trend is the achievement of slow but nevertheless concrete progress in a joint attack upon common problems of professional techniques. This progress undoubtedly is slower than would be necessary if parochialism were less prevalent

International Cooperation

among the various national segments of the human race, but certainly is not much less rapid than has been achieved since the war in many broader fields of sorely needed international co-operation. Another and very probably a vastly more consequential trend, is the increasing attention which is being given to the problem of adequate education and training for librarianship; for it is upon this foundation that lasting progress in the more circumscribed segments of professional practice ultimately must depend.

But it must always be borne in mind that, notwithstanding their many concrete contributions to closer international co-operation, national associations and their international co-ordinating bodies comprise but one element by which the world of books and related communications materials are being brought more closely together among free nations. Since World War II, there has been a ground swell of individual initiative, often aided by government programs and foundation funds, which most probably has been of equal or even greater significance. The task of national associations, therefore, is to apply a "new look" to their respective activities, to examine how they can work together more effectively and to determine how, severally and jointly, they can fashion themselves into more useful agencies by which the ever growing interest in international co-operation can be directed into increasingly fruitful channels.

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HELEN E. WESSELLS

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