



United Kingdom

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AS EARLY AS 1880, just three years after it was formed, the Library Association began to turn its attention to professional training. By 1884 a syllabus of examinations had been worked out by a special committee appointed for that purpose in 1881, and in July 1885 the first examinations were held at two centers, London and Nottingham. This was the small beginning, but the surprising thing to an observer of the situation, particularly to an American observer, is not so much the smallness of the beginning, but rather the unconscionable time that subsequently elapsed before the establishment of the first library school in Great Britain—at University College London in 1919. Some consideration of the reasons for this unusual and somewhat peculiarly British state of affairs is essential to an understanding of the major problems with which British library education has been confronted throughout its history.

The holding of the examinations by the Library Association at London and Nottingham in 1885 was a very different beginning from that represented by the establishment of the Columbia College School of Library Economy just two years later. This was not due so much to any important difference between the British and American librarians of the day on what should constitute the proper courses of study (on both sides of the Atlantic there was an inordinate emphasis on what Wellard has described as “the standard techniques of librarianship”¹), but rather to the difference in the facilities available and in the means by which control was to be exercised over the system.

The British approach emphasized control by means of a system of examinations operated by the professional body itself, with little or no attention paid to the facilities that might or might not be available to those wishing to prepare themselves for those examinations. There could hardly have been any other way (however strongly one

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wishes that there might have been). In the first place, it was very much part of a strongly traditional British system of preparation for the professions, going hand in hand with a deep seated belief in the supreme value of apprentice-type training for almost any career. William F. Poole was one American librarian (and there were others who supported him at the time) who held similar views on this side of the Atlantic. It was at the American Library Association Conference at Buffalo in 1883 that he told his audience: "In fact, I have entertained the idea that practical work in a library, based on a good previous education in the schools, was the only proper way to train good librarians."² In the Britain of the 1880's, however, there was no Melvil Dewey to take the opposing view; nor indeed, under the circumstances, could there have been.

Poole's own words: ". . . based on a good previous education in the schools . . ." (echoed by Dewey's ". . . the education needed is the best attainable . . .") bring us face to face with another major point of difference between the British and the American approaches, arising from the very different national attitudes towards the provision of facilities for higher education at the first-degree level and beyond. Writing in *The Guardian* in 1959, B. V. Bowden, Principal of the Manchester College of Science and Technology, drew attention to this situation as follows: "The English university world has always been a very small one. At the time of the American War of Independence there were nine universities in the United States; we then had two in England. Fifty years ago Ramsay Muir pointed out that we then had fewer universities in this country in proportion to our population than any other civilized country in Europe with the solitary exception of Turkey. How are we doing today? The proportion of the population of this country in full-time attendance at a university is much smaller than it is in most other countries. How are we to compare our universities with America's? About 40 per cent of English children survive in school to the age of 16. About 11 per cent go to sixth forms in school and 6 per cent to universities. Our university population is about a hundred thousand—theirs about three million; ours has doubled since 1939 and so has theirs; ours is likely to rise to 150,000 during the next ten years and theirs to seven million."³ Quite clearly the founding fathers of British library education three quarters of a century ago could at no time have considered the possibility of insisting upon "the best attainable education" as a necessary prerequisite for entry to the professional ranks.

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It must also be remembered that only in comparatively recent years have there been clear signs of a weakening of the opposition on the part of the British universities to the inclusion of facilities for "professional" or "vocational" studies within their walls. This again is closely connected with the strong position of the various professional associations. The winds of change are now blowing, it is true, and they are blowing through even the most hallowed halls of the most ancient of the universities, but none of this could have been foreseen in the early years of education for librarianship. Under the circumstances of the time there was but one road that could have been followed, viz. the operation of a system of professional examinations leading to a series of qualifications at various levels, the creation and maintenance of some kind of official list or "register" of members so qualified, and the encouragement (it could scarcely have been more than that) given to local groups of librarians in the larger centers of population to seek the cooperation of institutions of higher education below university level (and largely vocational in their curriculum) in inaugurating part-time courses for the benefit of students in the immediate vicinity. What might now be regarded as an undue emphasis on the importance of practical experience in those local libraries was also inevitable. Very few university graduates could be expected as recruits, and the handful who did enter the "profession" were to be found only in the larger national and university libraries. Here the level of academic attainment was all that mattered while the professional qualification was largely ignored and regarded increasingly as appropriate only to the much greater number of entrants to the rapidly expanding public library field (the Carnegie movement was at its peak in Britain between 1890 and 1910).

The position of the Library Association in this and other respects was greatly strengthened by the granting of its Royal Charter of Incorporation on its twenty-first birthday in 1898. On May 9 of that year, to quote Minto, "It was then moved and carried by acclamation: That the Fellows and Members of the Library Association gratefully accept the Royal Charter of Incorporation which Her Majesty the Queen has most graciously conferred upon them, and regard it at once a gracious recognition of the work accomplished by the Association, and an incentive to still greater efforts in the future for the promotion of its objects."⁴ The Charter, thus granted, established the Library Association as "the responsible representative body of the profession."⁴ Of special interest and significance are the third and tenth

of the "purposes" or "objects" of the Association, as stated in the Charter: "(3) To promote whatever may tend to the improvement of the position and the qualifications of Librarians," and "(10) To hold examinations in Librarianship and to issue Certificates of efficiency."⁵ No other agency, either association or institution of higher education, had such powers.

It is also of interest to note in passing that "Fellows" of the Association had already been elected, although there was not yet in existence any "register" of qualified (or "chartered") librarians. This professional accolade was being awarded by the Council to the very small number of librarians who had successfully completed the examinations for the "Full Certificate" (or "Diploma") under the several schemes of examination successively imposed upon a somewhat bewildered profession since the first examinations of 1885, and also upon a select number of senior members "distinguished in librarianship or scholarship." The official "Register of Librarians" was inaugurated in 1909, and in 1914 it was decided to restrict admission to the Fellowship (F.L.A.) to those who had passed the whole series of examination and obtained the Diploma. At the same time the category of Associate (A.L.A.) was introduced, to be awarded to those who had passed four of the six examinations, then comprising the whole syllabus. Reference will be made later to the substantial revision of the byelaws governing the Register that was to follow in 1928.

The Era of Part-Time Courses

If the beginnings of the system of professional examination and qualification were small, it would seem that the beginnings of professional training in Britain were microscopic. It was, of course, no real responsibility of the Library Association to provide facilities for training, although so far as can be discovered, it was in 1895, in the pages of *The Library* (the Library Association's official journal at the time) that we find the first concrete evidence of any effort being made to supply this obvious need. It was not, however, so much an official venture on the part of the Association as the work of an individual enthusiast, J. J. Ogle, Librarian of the Bootle Public Library, who had entered successfully for the first examination ten years earlier. Ogle's column in *The Library*, entitled "Library Assistants' Corner" (later "Our Junior Colleagues' Corner") ". . . dealt with notes and queries on subjects of practical librarianship, giving a series of questions to be answered by assistants."⁶ In 1899 this column was taken over by

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Henry Guppy, first editor of *The Library Association Record*, which began publication in that year and has remained the official journal of the Association ever since. The column seems to have expired in 1901.

By this time, however, a more serious attempt to provide for the training needs of the profession was being made in the form of the organization of part-time classes in preparation for the Association's examinations in a small number of larger cities, notably London (dating from 1898) and Manchester (from 1899). Of a less formal nature was a series of short annual Summer Schools, started in London in 1893 and ending in 1897. The part-time courses by 1950 were being provided ". . . in at least fifteen provincial towns, mostly in Technical Colleges, . . ." ⁷ and constituted a factor of great significance in British library education. Over a period of fifty years, the part-time classes were usually conducted weekly from September to June (in preparation for the Association's summer examinations) in technical and commercial colleges maintained by the local education bodies. These classes remained the most widely available and the most used form of professional training. The courses were conducted and financed by the educational institutions out of public funds, both local and national, but in almost every case the local professional group (usually a Branch of the Library Association) nominated the teaching staff and distributed information concerning the courses. In all cases the courses provided were specifically aimed at preparation for the Association's examinations, and the only qualifications awarded were those of the Association. Many other professions were conducting their program of professional "education" in the same way. From all of this the universities (over which neither the local education body nor the Ministry of Education has any control) remained aloof.

From 1902 to 1917 the London School of Economics (not then, as it is now, a part of London University) seems to have served as the main center of part-time instruction in librarianship in London. "In 1902, on the recommendation of the Education Committee (of the Library Association), the Council arranged with the London School of Economics to co-operate in conducting courses of instruction in the subjects of the examination syllabus on the following conditions, viz. that the Council of the Association should nominate the lecturers; that the classes should be open to all comers; that the Association continue to hold the professional examinations and to grant certificates; and that the Council should have equal representation with the Gov-

ernors of the School of Economics on the Committee managing the classes.”⁸ Quite clearly, this is something very different from the system of accreditation of professional schools by professional bodies as found in the United States. It is also very different from anything that might be found in a British University, where any attempt to introduce such a system of control or supervision by outside bodies would be strongly resented. It is, therefore, more than surprising, at least at first glance, that the next stage in the evolution of British library education was the establishment of the School of Librarianship at University College London in 1919.

Before turning to this, however, one other development of significance must be noted. Correspondence courses in preparation for the professional examinations were first organized by the Library Association in 1904. In W. A. Munford’s words, they were to “. . . remain, *mutatis mutandis*, the only method of preparation available to many young assistants, particularly those in the smaller towns and the remoter counties.”⁹ Since 1930 the administration of these courses has been the responsibility of the Association of Assistant Librarians, a previously independent professional body which became a section of the Library Association in that year.

Any attempt to comprehend the somewhat peculiar set of circumstances that eventually led to the establishment of the first British library school at University College London in 1919 must take as a point of departure an appreciation of the ever-increasing influence upon British librarianship of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. It was established in 1913, and to the impoverished library world of the day appeared to be endowed with the resources of Croesus. Over a period of about twenty years following the publication of the “Adams Report”¹⁰ by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees in 1915, this body came close to dominating almost the whole field of British librarianship, most notably in the increasingly important areas of public libraries and library cooperation. In the area of library education it can be said that if the Trustees had not agreed to finance the operation (as they did for five years) there would have been no London University School of Librarianship in 1919 nor possibly any British library school at university level until after the end of World War II.

Although the School was opened in October 1919, “. . . under the management of a Joint Committee . . .”¹¹ of University College and Library Association authorities, there was no question of insistence on the part of the Association of conditions similar to those in the case of

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the part-time courses at the London School of Economics. In the first place, a completely new qualification, the Diploma in Librarianship was introduced. In the second place, by granting certain exemptions to university graduates the School took what was probably the first step towards making it clear that there was a place for the graduate in British librarianship. That it was not notably successful in achieving this objective is shown by the preponderance of nongraduates attending the School in its early years (although they had in most cases attained a standard of secondary education superior to that of the majority of entrants to librarianship as a whole at that time). For the first time in the history of education for librarianship in Britain, there were now to be found full-time students at a full-time professional school under a full-time director and all within the walls of an institution of university rank.

This was indeed a far cry from Mr. Ogle's "Library Assistants' Corner" of 1895. It was also far removed from what many members of the Library Association, including several Council members, held to be the right and proper path for library training to follow. Since CUKT influence and CUKT financial support for the venture were the deciding factors and bearing in mind also all that had gone before, it should come as no surprise to discover that the reception given by the profession to this remarkable new venture was no more than lukewarm, and in many quarters downright frigid. To quote Wel-
lard: "Immediately that old obstacle to professional harmony was raised between the majority who viewed librarianship as a variety of techniques and the minority who saw it as a branch of learning."¹² There was also the thorny problem raised by what was seen by many to be an abdication on the part of the Council of the Association of its Queen-given right to control completely the examination and qualification of librarians. It was held by some that ". . . librarianships will inevitably go in due course to the college certificated librarian, generally to the exclusion of the non-collegian, . . ." ¹² and by others that ". . . its (the School's) diploma would 'destroy' the Library Association diploma."¹³ This problem was eventually solved by a compromise that was embodied in the revised byelaws of the Association which became effective in 1928, whereby holders of the Diploma of the London School became entitled to admission to the Register as Fellows.

Although the London School produced a number of distinguished members of the profession during the years between the wars, at-

tracted a slowly increasing number of university graduates, and received strong support in the important "Kenyon Report"¹⁴ of 1927, there is little to show that it exercised any significant influence upon the profession as a whole. Indeed, it could be said that the overwhelming majority of librarians who qualified for admission to the Register by means of attendance at part-time classes or correspondence courses or both were scarcely aware of the School's existence. In 1939, on the outbreak of World War II, the School closed its doors, and its Director, J. D. Cowley (who had succeeded the first Director, E. A. Baker, in 1934), was called to active service. There were probably few in the profession who mourned the closing of the School and few who cared whether or not it would be reopened at the end of the war. Almost certainly nobody in the country could have foreseen that in 1946, just twelve months after the conclusion of hostilities, no less than six library schools, including the reopened London School, would be in operation, with two others announced for January 1947.

The Development of Full-Time Schools

In 1933 a graduated system of examinations, with Elementary, Intermediate and Final parts to be taken in a prescribed order, was introduced for the first time. Certain exemptions from parts of the Final Examination were granted to university graduates, although under the new regulations governing admission to the Register, all candidates for the Associateship had to pass the Elementary and Intermediate Examinations. The new syllabus was a great improvement over anything that had gone before, but still did not lend itself to any rational form of full-time preparation for the examinations based upon it. It was part of an apparently never-ending process of patching-up the old rather than a step towards planning for the new. At the same time and throughout the thirties, there was a steady and notable rise in the standard of entry to the profession. The days of industrial and commercial depression in Britain served to divert many outstanding recruits to the comparatively secure positions available in the public services, including the library service. In the United States and in many other countries these young men and women went to college; in Britain the position was quite different, even as late as the nineteen-thirties.

The London School, the views of the Kenyon Committee (1927), the new regulations governing the Register, the revised syllabus of 1933, the influx of an increasing number of entrants of a higher stand-

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ard, the whole expansion of library service throughout the country, all began to form some kind of pattern. Confused though it was and increasingly overshadowed by the economic distress of the times and the threat of a world war, it indicated that at long last the old order was changing. Before the end of 1946 it was obvious that in the area of library education the new order was being created far more rapidly than anyone could have anticipated.

It would be misleading to convey the impression that the desirability and feasibility of a reorganization of the British system of library education had not occurred to anyone in the country prior to the outbreak of World War II. Even the conservative John Minto had expressed the view as far back as 1932 that "one looks forward to the time when, at no very distant date it is to be hoped, there will be established at the larger municipal libraries permanent library schools where systematic practical training in librarianship will be available for all already in the service and for those who aspire to take up librarianship as a profession."¹⁵ There is no record to show that any project along these lines was ever considered by the Library Association, although it is generally understood that the planning of the new Manchester Central Library (opened in 1934) did allow for the possible use of two or three rooms for such a purpose.

Ernest A. Savage was much more outspoken in his criticism of the existing system; the chapter on "The Training of Librarians" in his *Special Librarianship in General Libraries and Other Papers*,¹⁶ published in 1939, should be regarded as essential reading for any student of the history of British library education. He was one of the very few librarians of his day who saw clearly that the root of the problem was the failure to recognize the essential distinction between professional and non-professional duties in libraries and the consequently different training needs of these two groups of workers within the profession. He saw, as few others did, how harmful the prevailing practice was to professional status. "But while our system of training," he wrote in 1939, "is designed to suit any and every employee of a library, excepting only the domestic staff, is it possible to raise status and to win higher rewards? I feel sure that it is not. How can we expect to persuade the business men on town councils that issuing books and a great part of the clerking, as simple as any of the kind, is librarianship, even if the workers are certificated? Higher status and better remuneration will come only when we define professional duties and reserve them for professional librarians. We ought not to expect

every assistant (save the domestic staff) to train for librarianship. This practice has a nipping effect upon status.”¹⁷ Much later, in 1955, Savage was continuing his campaign with unabated vigor. “The monopoly of the L.A. in holding qualifying exams must be broken, or librarianship will become a closed, crusted calling. The London University Diploma is not enough to limit this monopoly. The L.A. exams, decided by examiners with no knowledge of examinees’ work, are unsound practice: The old London University external exams proved that. A change in our practice is therefore desirable.”¹⁸ A significant difference between 1939 and 1955 is that by the latter date Savage was no longer a lone voice in the wilderness; there were surprisingly many who agreed with him. Developments during the war years produced something approaching a transformation of the scene by 1946.

The role played by the Library Association prior to the establishment of the London University School in 1919 was vitally different from its position during the period of planning and negotiation that resulted in the opening of five new schools in 1946 and two more in 1947. (The London University School, reopened in 1945, can also be regarded as “new” to a very large extent. It was soon to reorganize itself as a wholly graduate school and later extend its program to offer a Diploma in Archive Administration as well as its Diploma in Librarianship). In 1919 the Council of the Library Association appears to have been a somewhat reluctant partner in an enterprise about which it was far from completely assured and in which the dominant influence had been the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. Before 1940 the CUKT had made clear to the library profession that it wished to withdraw from its heavy commitments in a field it had supported so generously over a period of nearly thirty years. This meant that in considering plans for post-war professional reorganization, including library education, the Library Association knew that it would be very much on its own. Whatever was created as part of such plans of reorganization would be the Association’s own creations, for better or for worse. The importance of this point, affecting the future relations between the Association and the post-war library schools, has not been generally realized.

The early wartime work of the Council of the Library Association, and of the Emergency Committee which it appointed, culminated in the publication in 1942 of Lionel R. McColvin’s report, *The Public Library Service of Great Britain*.¹⁹ The main significance of this report, which has almost certainly received more attention in the British

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library world than has any other similar publication, lies in the fact that it was very much the basis for the official Library Association's proposals for post-war reorganization, *The Public Library Service, its Post-War Reorganization and Development*,²⁰ published in 1943 and adopted, with a number of amendments not concerned with the section on library education, at the first post-war Annual General Meeting of the Association in 1946. There is little to suggest that McColvin had any special qualification for the task of making recommendations to the Council on the subject of professional training, and indeed there was not a single British librarian then available with experience in the administration of a full-time library school. This might also be borne in mind in considering the new syllabus of examinations, announced as part of the new program which went into effect in 1946.

McColvin's recommendations concerning library staffs and their recruitment, training, grading, and salaries take up more than twenty-five pages of his report, and one of the most extraordinary features of the section devoted to the library schools of the future is the detail into which he was prepared to go. Two examples will suffice: "How many tutors do we need at each school? Two—a senior and a junior. These two should be quite competent to cover the field, for, remember, it will be a general course."²¹ And again: "For reasons we shall expand later, the schools should not be too big. An average of 25-30 students at each would be sufficient."²² Fortunately, in the official "Proposals" of the following year, the Council accepted McColvin's major recommendations but avoided such detail.

Of much more significance are the questions relating to the location of the proposed new schools, what would be taught at them, and the nature of the qualifications to be awarded. An approach was made about this time to more than one university with a view to discovering their probable attitude towards a formal proposal on the part of the Association for the establishment of a school of librarianship. The University of Manchester was one of the universities approached, with Charles Nowell, then Manchester's City Librarian, acting as the Association's spokesman. These semi-official negotiations proved a dismal failure. In the first place, the universities themselves were approaching an almost frantic state of preparation for the great post-war expansion in higher education then being planned (49,000 students at the British universities in 1938; 97,000 in 1958). Secondly, and much more significant from the professional point of view, was the general acceptance by those responsible of McColvin's

somewhat remarkable views, expressed as follows in his report: ". . . we are convinced that the schools should be teaching and not examining bodies; therefore if a university accepts responsibility it must agree to this condition and not seek to award its own Diploma or other certificate."²¹ Quite simply, no university could have accepted such a condition (as surely McColvin and his other colleagues on the Council must have realized), just as the University of London would not have accepted it as far back as 1919.

The die was inevitably cast, therefore, in favor of seeking the cooperation of technical and commercial colleges, institutions that were largely vocational and professional in nature and under the control of their local education authorities, with financial assistance from the central government. Negotiations with a number of these institutions were conducted throughout 1945, with McColvin's recommendations forming the basis of the Association's case. A strong emphasis was placed upon the needs of the returning ex-service men and women, whose professional studies had been interrupted by the war, and upon the financial assistance that it was known the Government was prepared to give to them. Indeed, there is little doubt that at the time this was seen to be the prime consideration; to some, possibly, it was the only consideration. The present writer still does not feel he was over-stating the case unduly when he wrote in 1955: "It was in these rather strange circumstances that the nine new schools were founded between 1946 and 1950. In the eyes of the Library Association Council and the profession at large, they were simply training agencies within the long-established framework of the Association's examination and registration system; a system which had developed over a period of sixty years against a background of apprentice-type training, with little intellectual content to the work, and a confused pattern of methods of preparation—private study, part-time classes, summer schools, week-end courses, correspondence tuition. This system had operated reasonably well, without claiming to be anything more than mere technical training, because the Association's exclusive control over both syllabus and examinations ensured reasonable standards of national certification. All candidates, whatever their background, practical experience or method of preparation, had to submit themselves to the one series of tests. That in the minds of many was all that mattered; and, despite the greatly changed circumstances brought about by the establishment of nine full-time professional schools, there are still many who think it is all that matters today."²³ One of the

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main achievements of the new schools over the past seventeen years has been the conversion of an increasing number of the country's librarians to the view that it is not all that matters.

The announcement of the post-war syllabus of examinations in 1946 was followed by the opening of five of the new schools, in the Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Commerce (now the Scottish College of Commerce), in Leeds College of Commerce, in Loughborough College (now Loughborough College of Further Education), in Manchester College of Technology (later Manchester College of Science and Technology—in 1961 the school was transferred to the Manchester College of Commerce), and in the City of London College (later transferred to the North Western Polytechnic, London). Schools at Brighton Technical College and Newcastle upon Tyne College of Commerce were opened in 1947, and by 1950 two additional schools had been established at Birmingham College of Commerce and Ealing (Middlesex) Technical College. These new schools were, in a real sense, the creatures of the Library Association in the first instance, but it is important for the foreign student of British library education to realize that the Association does not possess any effective means of supervision or accreditation of a library school once it has been established. It is true that reference is made in various publications to "approved" schools of librarianship; in point of fact the schools have never been "approved" nor does any machinery exist whereby it could be done. The Ealing School, for instance, was established despite the view of the Library Association at the time that a third library school in the London area was not called for. All the new schools, as part of institutions under local education authority control, are subject to inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors, but this is conducted without any reference to the Library Association.

Of greater significance than this aspect of the schools' relationship with the Library Association is the syllabus of examination, within which their programs have inevitably been constructed. The revised syllabus of 1946, while retaining the three-fold structure of its predecessor, was much more clearly designed to provide for programs of full-time instruction. An Entrance Examination (later much revised and re-titled First Professional Examination) was to be followed by a Registration Examination, admitting successful candidates to the Register of Chartered Librarians as Associates (A.L.A.). A full-time course of an academic year's duration was thought to be a suitable preparation for the Registration Examination. University graduates

were granted exemption from the Entrance Examination and thus enabled to enter a library school directly upon completion of their degree course, if they so wished. Preparation for the Entrance Examination on the part of non-graduates would continue to be on the old lines—by attendance at part-time classes or by means of a correspondence course. It is of interest to note that some insistence upon the value of practical experience was still maintained; students were unable to apply for the Entrance Examination until they had completed a year's service in a library. It was further laid down that candidates for election to the Register were to have completed at least three years' service in a library and reached the age of twenty-three (a year at a library school being regarded as equivalent to library service for this purpose). For the minority, who might seek to aspire to the highest professional qualification, there was to be a Final Examination, with five years' service in a library and the attainment of the age of twenty-five as additional prerequisites. As in the case of Registration, the syllabus of the Final Examination was thought to lend itself easily to a one-year full-time course at a library school. All this certainly represented a tremendous advance on anything that had gone before, and the whole syllabus was apparently blessed with the virtue of neatness and compactness, well suited to the long established system of external control and examination by the professional association. Some reflection might have suggested that it was all rather Procrustean, but at the time the remarkable dual achievement on the part of the Association, in creating both a new syllabus and the new schools that were to teach it, tended to stifle criticism.

Certainly it was a remarkable achievement and at the time of the opening of the five new schools in the autumn of 1946, more than one member of the newly and somewhat hastily appointed faculties must have felt that new frontiers of library education were at long last within reach. There were others in the profession, however, who did not share this optimism. There had been a considerable emphasis in both the "McColvin Report" and the subsequent negotiations with the colleges concerned on the emergency needs of the returning ex-service men and women. It was estimated that over a period of three to four years the new schools would have completed their task in the provision of full-time and accelerated courses to enable these students to make up some of the time lost during the war. And after that? The fact that the number of schools and full-time students actually increased in number after the emergency period is one of the remark-

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able features of post-war British library education, and no little credit for this must go to the schools themselves, despite the early difficulties under which they labored.

These difficulties, including understaffing, sub-standard physical quarters and professional libraries, the inadequacies of the externally imposed syllabus and system of examining, the continued indifference and even hostility displayed by some members of the profession, were first clearly perceived and analyzed by Harold Lancour, then Associate Director of the Library School of the University of Illinois, who spent nine months in Britain between September 1950 and June 1951, under Fulbright auspices, studying British library education. His visit was probably somewhat premature; the schools were still full of teething problems, and the early emergency period had barely ended. Nevertheless his critical observations, whether made in private conversation, formal address, or the professional journals (a report of one of his more important contributions will be found in *North Western Newsletter*, July 1951)²⁴ proved thought-provoking and often disturbing. A more concrete result of Lancour's visit was that during the next few years two of the directors of British library schools were given opportunities to serve as summer session faculty members of the Illinois School. There can be no doubt that in these and other ways his visit was to influence the course of library education in Britain.

The emergency period over, the future comparatively secure, the faculties somewhat strengthened, the schools themselves began to look at the situation rather more closely and critically. Two of the directors of the new schools were now serving as nationally elected members of the Council of the Library Association and of its Register and Examinations Executive Committee and Education Sub-Committee (it was later to be established that a place on the Education Sub-Committee was to be reserved for a representative of the Schools).

In 1952, at a meeting at Manchester, a "Schools of Librarianship Committee" was formed, consisting of all full-time faculty members of the ten schools in Great Britain and the school at University College, Dublin. This committee (later to become a somewhat unwieldy body as a result of the considerable increase in the number of full-time teaching staff at the schools) has performed a number of important functions, including the provision of a forum for the discussion of common problems, the scrutiny of examination papers, and various cooperative enterprises. It has been increasingly consulted by

the Library Association, and its representatives played an important part in framing the new syllabus of examinations, finally approved by the Register and Examinations Executive Committee in April 1961. Much of the attention of the Schools of Librarianship Committee has been directed towards the less desirable features of the system of external examination. Some measure of success was achieved in this area by the acceptance on the part of the Library Association of proposals for the creation of "moderating" committees. These committees, a fairly common feature of the examination systems of other professional associations in Britain, consist of representatives of the examining, assessing, and teaching bodies in the various main subject areas of the syllabus. Participation in the setting of examination papers or in assessing the results is still denied to the teaching representatives; their contribution in this area is limited to the making of suggestions and comments upon examinations that have already been held. In 1962 the Schools of Librarianship Committee was reconstituted as the Association of British Library Schools. The problem presented to the old Schools of Librarianship Committee by the increase in the number of teaching staff in the full-time library schools has been solved by the appointment of an "Executive Committee," made up of the President and Secretary of the Association, the directors of the library schools in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and three elected members who are not directors.²⁵ The "approval" by the Library Association in 1963 of full-time attendance at certain courses held at the Liverpool College of Commerce may be regarded as tantamount to the recognition of an additional library school, giving a present total of eleven schools in Great Britain. As in the case of the other schools, this is not approval of either instruction or program, but simply of attendance on the part of the student, so that the time he spends at the school can be counted as part of his period of library service prior to admission to the Register of Chartered Librarians maintained by the Library Association.

A quantitative appraisal of the schools' performance in terms of their output of qualified librarians under the Library Association system was made by William Caldwell, Director of the Newcastle upon Tyne School of Librarianship during the course of a conference on library education held in London in May 1957. Caldwell's careful analysis of the figures led him to state that "66% of the Chartered Librarians elected from 1947-1956 are products of full-time courses at

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library schools.”²⁶ (He was considering only those students who had attended the schools in preparation for the Registration Examination). He added, “. . . the total of students who have experienced a full-time course at a British library school since the war is therefore 3,323, and a further 976 attended the University College school from its inception until it closed during the war years, making the grand total approximately 4,299.”²⁷ In other words, nearly four times as many students attended a full-time library school between 1946 and 1956 as during the whole of the twenty years prior to 1939. The number of students at the schools continues to increase steadily, even though almost everyone seems to be agreed that there are too many schools—a criticism made by Lancour in 1950-51.

It is scarcely necessary to say more in order to indicate the nature of the revolution in British library education brought about by the new schools since their establishment during the years following World War II. Their achievements, in the face of difficulties created by their own inadequate resources on the one hand and widespread professional obscurantism on the other, have been remarkable. Their graduates are now to be found in senior positions in libraries of all types throughout the United Kingdom. Many of the present and future leaders of the profession in the developing countries of East and West Africa, South Asia, the Caribbean, and other parts of the world received their professional education and inspiration in the overcrowded lecture rooms of Loughborough, Manchester, North Western Polytechnic in London or one of the other British schools. These schools have played a significant role in helping to raise the status of librarianship in Britain; they have attracted to the profession many recruits of high caliber, including an increasing number of university graduates; and they created in their more responsive students a lively spirit of questioning and criticism. In recent years their resources, in terms of teaching staff, programs, and departmental libraries, have improved considerably. Today more than one British school has a larger full-time teaching faculty than that found in a number of the long-established accredited schools in the United States and Canada. These points are stressed because of the ample evidence that even today there is little realization in some other parts of the world of the transformation that occurred in British library education during the post-war years. Paradoxically enough, the very success of the new schools may lead them to become one of the

major obstacles in the way of further progress. To understand this, it is necessary to record some of the more recent happenings in British library education.

In January 1962 the Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University announced ". . . a plan to provide the University with the first post-graduate school of librarianship outside of London."²⁸ This new post-graduate school, offering its own qualification, is now due to open its doors in October 1964.²⁹ A meeting of the Council of the Library Association on April 26, 1963, was informed that "It is now probable that a full-time school of librarianship will be set up by Queen's University, Belfast, offering a one-year librarianship diploma course for graduates. . . ." ³⁰ Clearly, Lancour's proposal of ". . . two or three schools affiliated to Universities, . . ." ²⁴ made to a somewhat skeptical audience a dozen years ago, makes more sense to the profession in 1963. It would seem highly unlikely that this new move will stop at Sheffield and Belfast, if only for the simple reason that in Britain, as elsewhere, it is so obviously the wave of the future.

This natural and inevitable tendency towards post-graduate library education in a country in which there will be three times as many students at the considerably increased number of universities by the late sixties as there were in 1939 may be regarded as the first and major threat to the position of the existing non-university schools, preparing candidates for the examinations of the Library Association. A second threat has already made itself felt in the new program and qualification of the Institute of Information Scientists (founded in 1960),³¹ and arises from the continued discontent of the special librarians, documentalists and others in the information sciences area with the traditional forms of library education. It is possible that the needs of this latter group will be met by one or more of the future post-graduate university schools and the announced plans of the new Sheffield University School of Librarianship include a reference to "the growing need for new staff trained for scientific and technical library work."³² Bearing in mind that in Britain, as elsewhere, there is an urgent need to attract more science graduates to the profession, it is difficult to see how this will be achieved at a non-university level.

As recently as September 1959 it was possible for the Education Officer of the Library Association to attempt to describe the British system of library education in the pages of *Library Journal*,³³ without making a single reference to the actual or potential role of the universities. It will provide some measure of the accelerated rate of

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change in the situation to pause for a moment and consider how misleading this would be today.

Traditions, including bad ones, die hard in Britain, as the new schools discovered during their early years. The schools themselves were to destroy some of the most cherished traditions in British library education and, in so doing, they speeded up the process through which they themselves will soon be forced to abandon their position as the principal agencies of library education. They still will have an important role, however, and they will be strengthened in this respect by the new syllabus of examinations of the Library Association when it comes into operation in 1964.³⁴ This future role will be the training of the many members of the ". . . solid, respectable, grammar-school educated secondary echelon, . . ." ³⁵ who will still be required to fill the professional positions of an intermediate or "middle" status (to use a designation more frequently employed on the Continent than in Britain or North America). The higher professional positions, to be occupied by the future leaders of the profession, will inevitably and increasingly be reserved for the university graduate, who has acquired his professional qualification at a post-graduate library school. When that time comes to Britain, as it has to many other countries, it will not be easy for the present non-university schools to accept their new role; nor will it be the least of their many contributions to British librarianship if they do so graciously and co-operatively.

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