



Introduction

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ON INTRODUCING THE APRIL 1955 ISSUE of this journal, concerned with "Current Acquisitions Trends in American Libraries," I noted that: "Throughout the issue the authors are aware of being parochial, but . . . they did not have the temerity to look abroad." On that and other occasions I have been disturbed by the fact that too much of our experience and our training has lacked both historical and comparative depth. In large measure American librarians have been monolingual and have had an inadequate understanding of library experiences other than in this country and in modern times. Thus we have practiced our profession with insufficient knowledge of how it is practiced elsewhere and of how it was practiced generations ago. This inadequacy is certainly a limiting factor in our professional practice, and furthermore it has made it difficult for us fully to bear our responsibilities abroad in the modern world.

This is not to say that American librarianship has altogether lacked an international outlook. So blunt a statement would be quite incorrect, because from its very beginnings the American Library Association has been concerned with things international. The year after the founding of the Association a group of American librarians traveled to England to participate in the initial meeting of the Library Association of Great Britain, and since 1885 Canadian librarians have regularly been members of the ALA. A Committee on International Cooperation was established in 1900, and since that date various committees and boards of the Association have given attention to international affairs.¹

It is true, however, that our participation in international activities, individually and organizationally, has developed most remarkably since the 1940's, and this development, of course, has related directly to the expanding involvement of the American people in the world at

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large. The meeting on October 9, 1942, in Farmington, Connecticut, of the Executive Committee of the Librarian's Council of the Library of Congress, the discussions of which led directly to the development of the Farmington Plan, was a significant event in this regard.² So was the session at Princeton University on November 25 and 26, 1946, of the Conference on International Cultural, Educational, and Scientific Exchanges, sponsored by two groups within the American Library Association, the Board on Resources of American Libraries and the International Relations Board.³ That Conference was called in order to open up American relationships with libraries abroad following limitations imposed by the Second World War and to chart those relationships on a broader scale.

From that time forward our involvement has been greatly enriched on a number of fronts. Extensive procurement programs have pressed us into understanding the publishing, bookselling, and bibliothecal activities of countries throughout the world. The Army Library Service and the United States Information Service libraries abroad have given numbers of American librarians direct experience in other countries. Library training programs, in which the ALA has had one degree or another of official involvement, have been instituted in Colombia in 1942, in Lima in 1943, in Japan in 1950, in Turkey in 1954, and in the Philippines, Tehran, and India in 1961. Fulbright and other personnel exchange and training programs have taken American librarians on research and teaching assignments to a number of foreign countries, and on the other hand have brought large numbers of foreign librarians to this country for training and for professional visits. Somewhat more recently a few of the professional library schools have been offering seminars and courses entitled variously "Comparative Librarianship" or "International Library Relations," the earliest of these having appeared about 1950 and most of them since 1960. Most recently there has been a movement toward greater American participation in the affairs of the International Federation of Library Associations.

This multifarious activity has certainly been to the credit of American librarianship and has been useful to the profession at large. Nonetheless, it is still true that, at least insofar as the written record is concerned, our detailed understanding of the history and practice of librarianship in other countries is meager. No American librarian has matched the wisdom and breadth of experience evident in Wilhelm Munthe's synoptic look at American libraries from the vantage

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point of his own cultural experience in Norway.⁴ We even lack in English, in general, more mundane and descriptive information about the practice of librarianship abroad. To be sure Professor Danton's recent book is a welcome and impressive contribution,⁵ but the general lack has led to this issue of *Library Trends*.

The original thought had been to concern ourselves with the practice of university librarianship abroad, but it soon appeared that this was too broad a swath, so the concentration has centered on Europe and the British Isles. It should be noted at this point that the October 1959 issue⁶ did incidentally provide useful current information on university libraries in most other parts of the world. It was particularly hoped that the articles in the present issue could be written for an American audience, not by American librarians but by librarians who knew the local situation at first-hand; happily it has been possible to realize that hope. It is true that Europe has not been completely covered, and thus a particular apology must be made in regard to those countries not represented here. The lack does not by any means reflect a failure to understand the valuable contribution of countries not dealt with here, but rather a lack of time and space to accomplish the task completely.

In planning the issue one thought had been to develop it not along geographical lines, but along substantive lines, each author to be concerned with some broad aspect of librarianship, such as cataloging, from an entirely European point of view. It soon became evident, however, that it was difficult to find enough people with the requisite breadth of experience across country lines. Thus the geographical approach has been maintained.

Each author has been asked to give attention particularly to those aspects of university librarianship of a most pressing concern to his countrymen in recent years, on the assumption that local situations will variously effect the development of librarianship, and the articles would seem to bear this out. One notes with admiration the patiently devised multi-national cooperative collection development program among the Scandinavian libraries. A variety of cultural and geographic factors have made this pioneering experiment feasible. Yet it is perhaps not quixotic to hope that the Scandia Plan may provide useful suggestions for other regions where collectively library resources are inadequate. As another example of local influences at work, the American reader will likely be struck by the particular application in certain countries of highly specific library legislation, an experience quite

foreign to American, or for that matter to British, librarianship. This legalism relates in part to a system of responsible central ministries, but more basically it stems from a fundamental cultural heritage, for this phenomenon touches many other aspects of life besides libraries. In this context, it is of interest to observe the widespread difference between European countries with tightly controlling national ministries and other countries with a dominant tradition of individually independent universities and libraries.

Yet with all the national differences of pattern and emphasis, several fundamental concerns and procedures in common are observable. The explosive demand for higher education is almost worldwide, putting before many governments the need rapidly to expand universities and their libraries or establish new ones. Open-access collections, of one size or another, are increasingly required, and this constitutes a considerable change in the European pattern. Of special interest is the widespread, and occasionally violent, concern with the disabilities posed by the heritage of autonomous, often quite unrelated, institute and "faculty" libraries in most European universities. In some countries the situation may be altered by administrative *fat*. Significantly, it is a Scandinavian country (Norway) that is developing a most reasonable procedure for effective modification.

At the point of preparing this introduction, I wish I had had the wit to include an article on the activities of IFLA's section for national and university libraries, because that body seems likely to be of increasing utility to European libraries, faced as they are in common today with so many compelling forces for growth and change.

I owe a special note of thanks to my colleagues at UCLA who produced translations that have been consistently praised by the original authors. Despite available glossaries there are still some difficulties with technical terminology. Two frequently used terms should be mentioned here. American readers should remember that a "faculty" in the European sense of a school or college within a university (as "Faculty of Sciences") differs from the American usage whereby "faculty" means the institution's total teaching staff. European readers should remember that "wissenschaftliche" and its equivalents differ from the English term "scientific." The former is best translated as "scholarly" or "research" (as "research library"), whereas in English and American usage "scientific" refers usually to the physical and biological sciences and not to the other disciplines.

Final responsibility for reference citations has in several instances

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been left with the authors of the articles, because the reference material was not readily available in this country.

My secretary, Mrs. Lillian Rader, has my thanks for keeping this European project under control in Los Angeles during the fall of 1963 while I enjoyably spent much of my time visiting with my colleagues themselves in Europe.

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