

Librarianship—An International Profession

図書館専門職の国際的性格

Foster E. Mohrhardt

フォスター・E・モーハート

要 旨

UNESCO と ICSU は 1967 年、科学情報の世界システムの実現性を調査する合同委員会を設置した (UNISIST) が、ここでも当初においては科学情報が強調される余り、図書館への関心はほとんど示されなかった。このような図書館無視のパターンはこれまでにたびたびくり返えされてきた。

図書館学の国際的性格を部外者が知らないことは、我々図書館人自身の認識不足も原因の一つとなっている。図書館サービスは本質的に国際的なものである。その扱うのは知識または情報であり、国境があるわけではない。そのための努力として、たとえば国際交換があり、また国際貸借も行なわれている。しかし我々は極めて限られた統計しかもたず、将来の改善に必要な詳細データは全く欠けているような状態である。MARC II に伴う目録事業の国家間分担体制は、資料の交換、貸借より以上の高度の協力としてフォーマルに推進すべきであろう。

一方、図書館の外からの圧力としては多領域研究の高まりがあり、図書館人はその焦点となるべきものである。このことは公害のようにほとんどすべての領域にかかわりをもつアプローチを必要とする場合に典型的に現われてきている。さらに情報の生産国、生産言語の増加、多様化も別のアспектとして加わってくる。この動向は個別的あるいは国内的に解決しようとしても不十分であることはいうまでもない。

図書館学においては最近、比較図書館学として顕在化した国際性への関心が強まり、この方面において慶応義塾大学の豊富な経験に期待するところが大きい。また国際団体として IFLA も上記の状況に適應するために変革しつつあり、とくにアジアからのより活発な参画が望まれている。(Y. K.)

Introduction

In January 1967, a joint committee was set up by UNESCO and ICSU (International Council of Scientific Unions) to study the feasibility of the establishment of a world scientific information system. The proposed system was

UNISIST, and scientists from various parts of the world, including Japan, France, U. S. S. R., U. S. A., U. K., Germany, Roumania, Hungary, and Holland, served as committee members to study the needs of the research community and the availability of information.

In their early discussions emphasis was given

Foster E. Mohrhardt, Senior Program Officer, Council on Library Resources, Inc., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
フォスター・E・モーハート：図書館振興財団企画部長。

to science information, abstracting, indexing and professional publications. Little attention was directed to libraries, but by the time that the committee made its final recommendations after three years of study, they began to recognize that libraries are basic units in the international transfer of information. As librarians watched the deliberations of the UNISIST Committee, they were distressed at the initial lack of recognition for the basic service of librarians and libraries to international information work. The pattern of the UNISIST study is one that has been repeated many times—attempts are made to set up new world information systems with no understanding of what libraries have been doing for decades.

The failure of outside organizations to be acquainted with the international character of librarianship is in part a result of our inadequacies as librarians in recognizing the broad international implications of our work.

Library service is in its essence international. This has been proven when countries have tried to control their libraries within nationalistic restraints. They have always failed. Our essential commodity is knowledge or information—and knowledge has never recognized geographical boundaries. Even in the political field, ideas that are developed in one country may acquire even greater significance as they reach other countries. As much cited example of the international influence of ideas is the impact of the American author Thoreau on the political structure of India. Although these influences of ideas are widely recognized, there has not been a similar understanding of the role of libraries in international information service.

Each of us in the library field could usefully begin to look at the basic purposes of our profession and their international implications. Asked about what they do, most librarians would reply that they are catalogers, children's librarians, reference workers or specialists in some other technical category. What a shock if any one would reply, "I am a professional expert in ideas and knowledge. I work on a global basis locating, classifying

and supplying complex and valuable information for those who need it."

Need for Study

My concern about the international posture of librarians is that we accept primarily as a status symbol our membership in an international profession. Only recently have we begun to explore and analyze the full range of the responsibilities that must be carried out. We haven't faced up to the new needs for wider cooperation. We don't even know all of the international library activities that are now taking place. The best known of our international work is the exchange between libraries of books, journals and other documents. How much information do we actually have about this activity? Statistically we know that libraries in the U. S. S. R. send out about 1,000,000 items a year and receive the same number in exchange, and that the U. S. Library of Congress receives on international exchange about 500,000 pieces per year. We don't know the total for the U. S. as a whole. We don't know the number of exchanges for most countries. Who could even estimate the worldwide exchanges that take place each year, that are strengthening the collections in libraries throughout the world? Statistically it must be an impressive total—millions of publications, carrying information and culture from country to country.

But we should know much more than the numbers of items. It would be useful to know something about the subject fields of information exchanged, the selection process, the types of sources, the techniques of exchange, and varieties of media. Moreover, the problems of exchange and impediments to exchange should be known and studied.

It would be even more significant if we could determine the impact of this constant flow of recorded information. We assume that is a beneficial agent for all countries—developing and developed. Further we should have comparisons of this activity with other types of communication. We should know move pre-

cisely our special role in the international information transfer process.

Closely related to the exchange activity is the lending of library materials between countries. Our knowledge of the field is very limited. We know for example that Soviet libraries in 1964 received about 5,000 books on international loan and provided 12,000 books to libraries in 42 countries. We have no conception of what is occurring on a worldwide basis, nor do we know what steps might be taken to simplify, expand and improve a valuable service.

Cooperative international efforts are also being carried on in the preparation of bibliographies, the development of special indexes and in the identification of bibliographies, the development of special indexes and in the identification of hard-to-locate titles.

International Forces

Most glamorous today are the international efforts at shared cataloging and automation. Best known, of course, is the Library of Congress work on MARC II in the computerization of its catalog records. Similar experiments are being carried on in other countries. To be successful these efforts require a formalization at a level exceeding any past efforts. Every nation can be a partner in this work that will eventually affect in some degree nearly every library in the world.

Many librarians are convinced that technical library developments are inevitably leading us toward increased international cooperation. In addition to these internal library pressures, there are external forces that make cooperation a requirement if we are to meet the needs of our users.

Librarians in all countries are daily becoming aware of intellectual activities and forces that place upon them unanticipated and unprecedented burdens. Within the past thirty years the fields of knowledge have expanded, proliferated and changed at a faster rate than ever before in history. This expansion of knowledge joined with the urgent needs of

information users have been responsible for an overwhelming increase in the quantity, variety and formats of publication. Added to this are the interdisciplinary interests of scholars in every field—the social scientists as well as the physical scientists. For example current studies of pollution require detailed information from nearly every field of knowledge. Most students, research workers and administrators are specialists who know a few fields very well. Where do they find help in moving from discipline to discipline? They should be able to turn to the librarian whose professional training and interest make him the focal point for interdisciplinary guidance.

Along with the challenges of the complexity and quantity of publications are additional international problems resulting from the increases in countries producing significant work. More countries are publishing more information in more languages than ever before.

It is obvious that efforts to cope with such a variety of challenges on an individual or even a national basis are inefficient and unsatisfactory. Two responsible groups are concerned with our professional development in the international field. Many of us are looking hopefully to the Library Schools and to the International Organizations for guidance and leadership.

Comparative Librarianship

Library schools have always been aware of the international flavor of the profession, but it is only recently that they have developed studies and courses in Comparative Librarianship—the academic term for International Librarianship. Just recently S. Simsova and M. Mackee have provided us with *A Handbook of Comparative Librarianship*. You at Keio University have had as extensive experience as any school in the world in comparative librarianship. Many of us look to you for the critical analysis and study of this field that will serve as a basis for future development. Beyond an awareness of their international responsibilities, students must be challenged to explore the possibilities for service, never

before possible, as a result of new international, technical and social developments.

International Organization

Improved and strengthened cooperation also requires librarians to work more effectively with the two international bodies that stress their interests—UNESCO and IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations). UNESCO has from its beginning supported libraries and the development of libraries throughout the world. IFLA needs a special notice here, since it is at a crucial point in its history. It began in 1927 as a forum for discussion of high-level problems by a small group of national leaders. Although its interests and membership expanded in the years following, IFLA still maintained its reputation as a social-professional body somewhat outside the current needs of librarianship. A change began to occur about 10 years ago during the presidency of Sir Frank Francis, when the association started to respond to practical library needs, broadened the base for participation by all members, and took a critical look at its structure and objectives. Last year Dr. Herman Liebaers assumed the presidency of an organization that was rapidly changing to meet today's needs. Mr. Liebaers is already taking steps to strengthen the IFLA staff so that it can become a significant international force.

We must cooperate with IFLA which has the basic interest in and responsibility for librarianship. Your help from the Pacific Area is particularly needed, since there has been a lack of geographical balance in IFLA participation. For many years IFLA was European oriented, in part because of travel problems.

Recently, however, there is increasing worldwide representation, but distance and travel costs continue to make it difficult for Asian countries to share in the Association's programs. It is hoped that sometime in the near future an IFLA Conference can be held in Asia.

IFLA has now strengthened its Secretariat, expanded the range of its interests and set up a Program Development Group to provide greater responsiveness to needs. It is developing centers for the standardization and implementation of library operations. For example, the new Secretariat for Cataloging will stimulate and coordinate international cooperative cataloging efforts. Other areas of major interest are work with developing countries, professional training, automation, reprography, and preservation.

Summary

We have a commitment to our professional colleagues in every country as well as mutual interdependence. Just as civilizations and countries have passed through many stages of development from the primitive to the sophisticated, so have libraries in their technical and professional activities. Within the present century we have moved from the time when most library problems were local to the stage where they were national and now to the point where many essential solutions will only be found in international cooperation.

President Liebaers of IFLA expresses a position strongly held by librarians who are at the forefront of library development when he says, "the international aspects of professional work are becoming more and more numerous, and thus bulk ever larger in everyday practice."