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Urban Information Specialists and Interpreters: An Emerging Radical Vision of Reference for the People, 1967–1973

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Struggle for Social Relevance

Public librarians in the United States were not oblivious to the turmoil of social change in the 1960s. In the wake of the civil rights movement, the 1964–68 War on Poverty, and the widespread influence of works such as Michael Harrington's 1962 book *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* and the problematic Moynihan Report of 1965—which simultaneously advocated for and pathologized the low-income African American family—librarians questioned their role in low-income communities of color.[1]

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1   Kathleen Weibel, "The Evolution of Library Outreach 1960–1975 and Its Effect on Reader Services. Occasional Paper Number 16," (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, 1982): 3–5; Christina Copenhaver and Joanne Boelke, "Library Service to the Disadvantaged, A Bibliography," (Minneapolis: ERIC Clearinghouse on Library and Information Sciences, 1968).

Increasingly, public libraries created programs to reach "underprivileged" (or "unserved") communities, and in 1968 the American Library Association (ALA) opened an Office for Service to the Disadvantaged.[2] Most of these programs focused on the deficits of patrons, not the failings of the economic, social, and political systems in which they lived. Many library articles during this period assumed that the problem to be solved was that the "disadvantaged" were unaware of or had incorrect knowledge about services available to them.[3] From this viewpoint, low-income urban residents were seen to have needed reference services relevant to daily problems because they lacked the "ability to cope in the complex metropolis," and those disadvantaged by "age, poverty, handicaps, racial and cultural discrimination, unemployment, and undereducation" were primarily hampered by their own low literacy, relatively little contact with outside institutions, and an over-reliance on mass media and local rumor for information.[4] In 1975, a wide-ranging review of the relevant contemporary literature posited that low-income people sought to fulfill ever-changing ("kinetic") crisis information needs more than long-term ("potential") information needs (such as knowing the names of one's government representatives) because of their inability to plan for the future.[5]

An alternate interpretation of low-income communities' demand for urgent information, of course, would be that their lives were in more constant crisis than people with greater racial, social, economic, and educational privilege. Some library studies did acknowledge that people needed guidance because an increasingly convoluted array of service agencies with unclear, overlapping mandates was creating confusion.[6] Regardless of how they framed the problem, more public librarians recognized that low-income urban communities of color were not being served

2   Ford, Barbara J. "Libraries, Literacy, Outreach and the Digital Divide." *American Library Association.*

3   Thomas Childers and Joyce A. Post, *The Information-Poor in America*. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1975), 7, 32, 40.

4   Rosemary Du Mont, *Reform and Reaction*, 117; Childers and Post, *The Information-Poor*, 7, 32, 40.

5   Ibid, 36–7.

6   Jane E. Stevens, "Urban Information Centers and Their Interface with the National Program for Libraries and Information Service", (Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, 1975): 6, 17. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED114102.pdf

adequately by libraries, and that reference services that addressed daily problems would be helpful. Several conferences were held throughout the mid-1960s to mid-1970s for librarians to discuss "library service to the unserved."[7]

This chapter will examine how the library profession, particularly within the context of LIS education, acted on its growing desire during this era to enable librarians to be more relevant and responsive to low-income, primarily African American, urban communities. It will first describe the dominant trends within library discourse, based on library writings of the time (particularly conference proceedings and articles in *Library Journal*), and how ideas shifted over the course of roughly a decade starting in the mid-1960s. It will then give a brief overview of the urban librarian training programs that emerged in the early 1970s. The latter half of the article, based on archives of internal and external correspondence, statements presented at conferences, library publication articles, reports to funders, published essays by the program directors, and press releases, will examine in greater detail the case of three related projects spearheaded by Mary Lee Bundy, which were among the earliest and most radical efforts. The first two projects were related, and belonged to the University of Maryland: a field training for library students, and then a program for "urban information interpreters" which sought to recruit African American librarians and emphasized political awareness and action-research projects in its curriculum. The third project was an independent publishing venture for social justice reference sources. Finally, this chapter will discuss the Maryland urban librarian program's unfortunate demise amidst increasingly rancorous conflict between the program leaders and their community partner, university administrators, and federal funder. The chapter concludes by seeking to draw lessons from the successes and failures of these early programs.

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7   Theodore Samore, *Progress in Urban Librarianship: A Seminar on Community Information Needs and the Designing of Library Education Programs to Meet These Needs* (Milwaukee: Wisconsin University School of Library Science, 1974); Virginia H. Mathews, "Narrative Evaluation Report on the Institute for Strengthening Librarians' Capability to Elicit and Respond to the Felt Needs of Minority/Culturally Isolated/Disadvantaged Persons and Groups in the Southwest," (Washington, DC: Bureau of Libraries and Educational Technology, 1972). Note that the 1974 Wisconsin conference was a sequel to an earlier conference at the same university in 1967.

From Information and Referral to Information Power

One way to disseminate information about jobs, housing, health care, childcare, welfare, and other services was the creation of Information and Referral (I&R) centers, sometimes called neighborhood information centers. I&R centers began to appear in U.S. cities in the late 1950s, and gained steam throughout the 1960s. The roots of I&R services were in the Social Service Exchange that had once existed among social welfare agencies, which were developed in an earlier wave of response to harsh social conditions in the 1870s. I&R centers therefore had evolved independently of libraries.[8]

Public librarians, however, took notice of the growing I&R center movement, given that they shared the same patron and client base. Prompted not only by admiration, but also by fear of irrelevance as non-library information systems grew stronger, they began to question how library reference services might learn from I&R centers.[9] Libraries were filled with professionals well-equipped to collect, organize, and distribute information, but not necessarily trained or willing to take on I&R roles that included elements of interpreting legal texts or offering personal counseling.[10] Many did not want to give patrons direct advice or refer to sources beyond books, even as some librarians began to point out that the most current information might now be obtained via a telephone call or non-traditional publication.[11] Despite trepidation about librarian reticence, training, logistics, and budgets, some urban libraries began to incorporate I&R methods into their reference work. They created telephone hotlines and systemat-

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8   Nicholas Long, "Information and Referral Services: A Short History and Some Recommendations," in *Libraries and Neighborhood Information Centers: Papers Presented at an Institute Conducted by the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science*, October 24–27, 1971, edited by Carol L. Kronus and Linda Crowe, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science, 1972): 3, 10; Stevens, *Urban Information Centers*, 3.

9   James Welbourne, "Training Urban Information Specialists," in Kronus and Crowe, *Libraries and Neighborhood Information*, 108.

10   Dorothy Sinclair, "Linking New and Traditional Library Services," in Kronus and Crowe, *Libraries and Neighborhood Information*, 76–78; Estabrook, "Emerging Trends in Community Library Services," *Library Trends*, 28 (Fall 1979): 162.

11   Mary Lee Bundy and Paul Wasserman, "Professionalism Reconsidered," *College & Research Libraries*, 29, no. 1 (January 1968), 9–10.

ically referred patrons to service agencies.[12] Libraries also acquired pamphlets, directories, and contact information for local agencies as part of their reference collections. However, many I&R-like reference projects to publicize local services relied on ephemeral federal funding and were therefore short-lived.[13]

The I&R center model of reference, and its aim to increase individuals' access to services, with the library serving as a neutral conduit, could hardly be called radical. Librarians were generally reluctant to criticize service agencies for fear of jeopardizing their collaboration, and a 1973 model for I&R centers explicitly stated that the model was "not intended to bring about any *direct change* in the delivery of human services, since that is unrealistic." [emphasis added].[14] However, the I&R model signaled a shift to reference that prioritized the daily needs of residents in low-income neighborhoods. Next in the evolution would be the construction of reference as a way to energize communities toward collective change, with both librarian and patron taking on a critical stance regarding service providers.

While libraries experimented with the I&R model, a more radical vein began to emerge within certain segments of librarianship. In 1969, ALA recognized the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), founded by a small but rapidly growing contingent of librarians who saw an urgent need for libraries to respond to the intense social changes of the time.[15] SRRT founders attacked the idea of library neutrality, which they critiqued as an excuse to avoid confronting social injustice.[16] Librarians of color—although severely underrepresented—also began to create their own affiliates: the Black Caucus in 1970, the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Caucus (now "Association") in 1975, and REFORMA in 1976.[17]

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12   Ibid., 10.

13   Stevens, *Urban Information Centers*, 10–15, 25; Estabrook, "Emerging Trends," 151, 159; Major Owens, "A Model Library for Community Action," *Library Journal* 95, no. 9 (1970): 1704.

14   Long, "Information and Referral Services," 10.

15   Kenneth Duchac, "A Plea for Social Responsibility," [reprint; original August 1968], *Library Journal* 117, no. 8 (1992): S6.

16   Wayne Wiegand, "Tunnel Vision and Blind Spots: What the Past Tells Us About the Present," *The Library Quarterly*, 69, no. 1 (1999): 19.

17   Although REFORMA's purpose is serving Spanish-speaking *patrons*, it has also drawn in Latino librarians.

One influential figure in librarianship at this time was Major Owens, a librarian with the Brooklyn Public Library in the 1950s and 1960s. An activist both within and beyond libraries, Owens oversaw New York City's antipoverty program from 1968–1973, served as a member of the United States House of Representatives for his Brooklyn district from 1983–2006, and was called the "librarian *in* Congress".[18] Owens decried in unstinting terms the failure of the public library to be relevant to social needs, particularly those of low-income minority neighborhoods. In a stirring 1970 *Library Journal* article, Owens described how libraries could directly supply "information power" to communities, insisting that true change could not come "case by case, with individual and family counseling… [t]he only answer is community action, total effort."[19]

This kind of collective power would mean, for example, knowing when annual appropriations were decided and the names of local officials and their respective roles in the budgeting process, with librarians providing straightforward explanations of city fiscal matters.[20] Owens envisioned information as a tool of righteous persuasion in the hands of a progressive-minded community, and explained why librarians had to play an active role:

> Comparative statistics which show the cost of a hand grenade vs. the cost of milk for school children or the cost of a super bomber vs. the cost of a low-income project are the kinds of things that the community will need as weapons to battle for a greater share of the funds needed to improve their lives. These bits of information become weapons in the community arsenal. While the average librarian would be able to secure all of this material within a relatively few hours, most community action personnel or the residents themselves would have to search for days or weeks, or are completely unaware of the fact that they can get such information.[21]

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18   American Library Association, "Memorial Resolution for Major Owens," *ALA Memorial #2*. (Philadelphia: ALA Midwinter Meeting, 2014): 1–2; Joseph Fried, "Major Owens, 77, Education Advocate in Congress, Dies," *New York Times*, October 22, 2013, A27; John N. Berry III, "Major Owens," *Library Journal* 138, no. 21 (2013): 10; New York Library Association, "Major Owens Remembered," *Bulletin of the New York Library Association*, 62, no. 1 (February 2014).

19   Owens, "A Model Library," 1703.

20   Ibid.

21   Ibid.

The New Urban Library Education

Several Library and Information Science (LIS) programs emerged to train librarians to bring this kind of information power to communities. Major Owens, with Miriam Braverman, founded the Community Media Librarian Program (COMLIP) at Columbia University's library school in 1973.[22] Other programs in this vein included the Urban Library Services Program at Case Western University (1972–1974); the Inner City Library Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (1971–1974); a "Research-Action-Teaching" series of activities at Syracuse University (underway at least by 1971); and the Community Information Specialist Program at the University of Toledo (1972–1978).[23] The University of Maryland at College Park ran two related initiatives, to be discussed in greater detail below: an initial venture called the High John Library (1967–1968), and the Urban Information Specialist Program (UISP) in 1970–1971.

These new urban LIS programs varied in how they framed their goals. At Syracuse, the assumption was that low-income residents often "misinterpret[ed] the social agencies' purpose," and that what they needed most was information such as "finding a job, getting the furnace fixed, getting insurance, finding a daycare center, finding a doctor."[24] They disregarded the long-term potential information needs that Owens would have said were crucial—such as understanding their rights and how local government worked—as "luxuries when one is cold and hungry."[25] In contrast, the Maryland UISP asserted that new kinds of reference services could go beyond immediate individual crises to "secure the citizen's right to partic-

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22   Miriam Braverman, "The Community Media Librarian Program of Columbia University," in Samore, *Progress*, 25; Mary Lee Bundy, "The Social Relevancy of Library Education: An Accounting," in *Activism in American Librarianship*, 1962–1973, Mary Lee Bundy and Frederick J. Stielow, Eds., (New York: Greenwood Press. 1987): 94.

23   Brenda Dervin, "The Research-Action-Teaching Effort at Syracuse University's School of Library Science," In Samore, *Progress*, 129; Laurence L. Sherrill, "Insight before Outreach: UWM Trains for Inner City Library Service," *Wisconsin Library Bulletin*, 28, no. 2 (March–April 1972), 79–80; Finding Aid of the Inner City Library Service Institute Records, 1971–1974; Goldwyn, A.J. "The Urban Library Services Program (1972–1974) at Case Western Reserve University," in Samore, *Progress*, 27; Miles W. Martin, "The Community Information Specialist Program," in Samore, *Progress*, 32; Bundy, "Social Relevancy," 92.

24   Dervin, "Research-Action-Teaching Effort," 131–32.

25   Ibid.

ipate in institutional decision making affecting their welfare, and to encourage the poor to participate and to make change."[26]

Most of the new programs included both traditional courses in reference work and courses about inner city social issues. Syracuse's version of the latter was called "Minorities: Library and Information Centers" and was intended to " 'blow the students' minds."[27] Implicit in such phrasing was the expectation that students in the new urban programs would continue to be mostly White and middle class, as was typical of traditional LIS programs, and this held true for the most part. The programs also required fieldwork in libraries and/or social service agencies. These encounters often brought out middle-class White students' discomfort with and ignorance of the communities they wanted to serve, and sometimes revealed that library schools were not well prepared to navigate partnerships with other institutions, as several were caught off guard by logistical and territorial conflicts.

Case Western asserted that potential students who merely "wanted to 'help' people but who had no contact with urban poverty were not accepted." However, the tone of final student reports belie the depth of that claim.[28] Their students worked twelve hours a week at a social agency and four hours at a public library.[29] Dissatisfied with the work in the agencies, they requested and were allowed to take over the running of a library branch, with faculty convincing the library to replace existing staff with people who "had to some degree the same ideas and goals" as the students, even though the students were only to stay one year.[30] One student later recalled with surprise that residents were not happy to lose their familiar

26   Mary Lee Bundy, Robert Bundy, Andrew Jones, William Miles, Robert Morris, and
     James Welbourne, *Urban Information Specialist Project: An Educational Program to
     Prepare Community Information Workers in the Urban Setting*, (College Park, MD:
     School of Library and Information Services, University of Maryland, 1971): 8.

27   Ibid., 133.

28   Benjamin F. Head, "Urban Library Services Program at Case Western Reserve
     University: My Education, Experiences and Attitude," in Samore, *Progress*, 82; A.J.
     Goldwyn, "The Urban Library Services Program (1972–1974) at Case Western Reserve
     University," in Samore, *Progress*, 27.

29   Roger Mae Johnson, "Field Work in Public Library Training—The Only Way to Go,"
     in Samore, *Progress*, 72–3.

30   Goldwyn, "The Urban Library Services Program," 31; Head,"Urban Library
     Services Program," 84.

staff, nor to see changes made without consulting the community, such as removing a long-standing wrought iron fence because students deemed it unattractive.[31] In his account, this student glosses over these conflicts before concluding with satisfaction, "I have been able to learn how to handle myself in many inner-city situations which is really saying a lot… I have had much personal growth."[32]

At Syracuse, students worked five hours a week at a local information center, met with community leaders, and went with staff to "the jail, to welfare homes, to burned-out houses, to family crises."[33] Much time was spent discussing students' "personal problems of coping across such cultural differences."[34] Students recorded journal entries such as: "Four hours at the neighborhood center and I'm dead, emotionally and physically. Everything is crisis." Another wrote: "[e]verything here is very personality oriented and somehow I just don't fit;" and, with a dawning insight, "neighborhood people must run the Center. They live in the community. They know where the hidden streets are."[35] Students at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee mostly found their fieldwork helpful, but some complained of a lack of preparation, feeling rejected by patrons for not sharing the same ethnic background (Chicano), and a lack of trust between the university and the agency. Library staff gave mixed reviews of the students' work, and requested clearer roles and expectations for the placements.[36] One Syracuse faculty member—who had begun to question whether some community problems were attributable not to community ignorance, but rather to a lack of resources and to agencies' failures to fulfill their promises—reflected that while it was hard for middle-class newcomers to understand the neighborhood, the neighborhood was all too familiar with the "establishment point of view."[37]

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31 Ibid., 85.

32 Ibid., 86.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 134.

35 Ibid.

36 David M. Logsdon, "An Evaluation of the UWM School of Library and Information Science Inner City Institute Program: Summary Report," in Samore, *Progress*, 109–26.

37 Ibid., 134, 136.

Some of the new urban programs tried to recruit more students of color and students from working-class backgrounds. Columbia's COMLIP did not require a bachelor's degree for admission if an applicant had shown "an active involvement that resulted in a contribution to the community," and was notable in that thirteen of their initial sixteen students were minorities (twelve Black and one Puerto Rican).[38] But few LIS students were like Mary Suttle, who was both a library student and local resident, and understood that her community saw the library as "a non-communicative animal," "an alien in the community," and a place for middle class people who had extra leisure time.[39]

The naïveté and unexamined privilege of middle-class White students in urban library programs would later be derided by one of the founders of the University of Maryland UISP, Mary Lee Bundy, as a "wasteful use of public funds for Whites to 'research' information needs of urban people, only to 'discover' what any urban resident already knows."[40] Bundy's critiques of librarian training would eventually show her to be among the most radical of the influential LIS leaders of her time. She problematized library reference that would reproduce, without critical comment, information about services that came from the agencies providing the service, as such institutions restricted what they let people know in order to avoid scrutiny. While acknowledging the importance of disseminating information, Bundy stressed that merely learning about opportunities "does not multiply the number of opportunities… [i]nforming a man of his rights does not ensure he will receive them."[41]

> The man going on trial in a domestic case does not want to know the law; he wants to know how to ensure that his case comes before a judge who understands his culture. Someone considering taking advantage of a low-moderate income housing program wants some realistic advice on what he is actually getting himself into. People in a

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38   Braverman, "Community Media Librarian Program," in Samore, *Progress*, 26.

39   Mary Suttle, "Urban Library Training Program: Fieldwork," in Samore, *Progress*, 76; Mary Suttle, "Determining Community Information Needs: A Personal Statement." In Samore, *Papers*, 19.

40   Urban Information Specialists, *Community Information Programs: Nine Proposals*, (College Park, MD: Urban Information Interpreters, Inc., 1975), 8.

41   Mary Lee Bundy, "Urban Information and Public Libraries: A Design for Service," *Library Journal* 97, no. 2 (1972): 162–64.

tenement trying to force a landlord to make improvements may need help in finding out who he is and how to force him to make changes, not the law, which is on [the landlord's] side anyway.[42]

In Bundy's view, in order be relevant and effective, librarians would have to go beyond the I&R ideal of increasing patrons' access to information to becoming "information interpreters" who were unabashed advocates and active consultants to community-based organizations. Such information workers would do things like unearth policy-makers' voting records, the public and private interests of city council members, and the names of slumlords, all to support action for social justice.[43]

High John the Conqueror

Despite the radicalism of Bundy's later writing, her first attempt to integrate fieldwork into library education in 1967 fell into many of the same traps as the other urban LIS programs, i.e., White students' discomfort with and ignorance of a low-income African American neighborhood, conflict between the library school and their community partner, and a short, grant-dependent life.

The 1967 project was known by the name of the library that served as a lab for the Maryland School of Library Information Services (SLIS) students: High John, after the African American folk hero High John the Conqueror.[44] As with the other urban library programs, the goal was to have students learn first-hand by working in a "deprived" community, in this case Fairmount Heights, Maryland, just outside of Washington, D.C. Eight SLIS students took a course in "Library Service to The Disadvantaged" and worked four hours a week at High John, while four of their classmates worked twenty hours a week at the library, took a research methods seminar, and were considered research assistants. The tuition of these four students was waived, and each was paid $2,700/year ($19,692 in 2017 dollars).[45]

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42 Ibid., 166.

43 Ibid., 163, 166.

44 "High John," *Library Journal* 93, no. 2 (1968): 147.

45 Ibid., 148; Bundy and Moses, "A New Approach", 4; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. *CPI Inflation Calculator.* http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl

The project was originally meant to last three years, with the Prince George's County library system contributing $20,000 for the first year, and the SLIS providing $88,000 in grant money from the federal Office of Education (OE) for the first 18 months.[46] The branch that became High John had previously operated between 1948–1961 before being closed "due to lack of business" and replaced by a bookmobile.[47] The building was a rambling house which had its reference collection in the dining room, adult section in a former bedroom, children's books tossed into a big box, and a staff room with no door, into and out of which children wandered at will.[48]

High John was less reflective of Bundy's later racial critiques than of other values of the new generation in the 1960s, such as individual liberty and an escape from traditional norms. An unnamed reporter for *Library Journal* felt that the "principal factor about High John is its looseness," and there was no traditional cataloging, nor any fines.[49] Richard Moses, of Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library, who oversaw the fieldwork and taught the research seminar, said that "[a]nyone can do anything he wants in the library, as long as he doesn't interfere with anyone else's freedom. That's about as close to a rule as we can get."[50] Although the library did have an "information center" for referrals to local agencies, I&R-style, there was no well-defined or revolutionary view of reference.

In a striving-to-be-hip account penned for the ALA *Bulletin* ("Those things? Tokens, man. Tokens? Yeh. You pay for your books with 'em"), Moses indicates that High John was always more about the library students' experience than the community they purported to serve. By his account, the library school had wanted to create "a laboratory library to give the middle class librarian-to-be a taste and a talent for working with 'those people'— a

46   "High John,"148; Mary Lee Bundy and Richard Moses, "A New Approach to Educational Preparation for Public Library Service: An Experimental Program in Library Education for Work with a Specialized Clientele," (Washington, DC: Bureau of Research, Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1969): 1. http://files.eric.gov/fulltext/ED027929.pdf.

47   Elizabeth B. Hage, "More High John," *Library Journal* 95, no. 18 (1970): 3416.

48   Ibid, 149–51.

49   Ibid, 151.

50   Ibid.

real so-called library 'poverty program.'"[51] All of the initial twelve students were White (eleven were women), and once on the ground "were clearly suffering from cultural shock" in the poor Black community.[52] Students grew frustrated with the time it took to build relationships in the neighborhood, and after incidents of broken windows and stolen equipment, some expressed fear and refused to work in the evenings.[53] They were also flustered by the children and teens' rambunctiousness and felt that Moses and the one professional librarian in the branch—both of whom interacted with more ease with patrons—had created an environment they couldn't handle. When Moses withdrew from day-to-day operations of the library, he admitted he hadn't prepared students well enough to take over.[54] In response to the White students' "culture shock" (the sole Black student joined in the second semester), the SLIS added two class sessions on "exploring [students'] personal prejudices, guilt and anxiety," after which the students tellingly reported that they felt the hours spent processing their own feelings was "more valuable than all of the others put together."[55]

High John soon ended, with bitter feelings. As with some of the other urban programs, the UMD SLIS ran into conflict with their partner over territory, logistics, and restore original: differing interpretations of what had happened and what it meant. SLIS Dean Paul Wasserman fretted that their experiment had only reached what he jarringly called "the white Negroes—the ones who are after the usual middle class values" and not the truly deprived.[56] The *Library Journal* reporter thought that Mary Lee Bundy, as project director, and Wasserman had not been concerned by what would happen to the people of Fairmount Heights after they left, a sentiment vigorously seconded by Elizabeth Hage, the county library director, who charged that

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51   Richard B. Moses, "Jottings from High John: Random Paragraphs Toward a Sometime Article," *ALA Bulletin*, 62, no. 4 (April 1968): 378–79.

52   "High John,"152.

53   Ibid.

54   Ibid, 153.

55   Mary Lee Bundy and Richard Moses, "A New Approach to Educational Preparation for Public Library Service: An Experimental Program in Library Education for Work with a Specialized Clientele," (Washington, DC: Bureau of Research, Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1969): 11–12. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED027929.pdf

56   "High John", 153.

when the grant money was cut off after 18 months, the University of Maryland "dropped the project like a hot cake," leaving the county to pick up the tab to continue services.[57] Hage went on to describe the "bitter disillusionment [of] a community that had grown to regard the branch as a bright spot in an otherwise poverty ridden and long neglected area."[58] She and two of the SLIS leaders got into a public scrape with extended tit-for-tat postmortems of the project, both published in *Library Journal*, each accusing the other of failing the community.[59] One SLIS professor admitted that the library had been unwisely chosen without community input, and instead based on "criteria developed by liberal, white librarians with only marginal knowledge of the community," and he cautioned that any future projects must be truer collaborations in order to succeed.[60] With an unresolved, broken relationship with the public library, the UMD SLIS moved on to its next iteration of librarian training, this time with a stronger definition of social justice goals.

The Urban Information Specialist Program: Ideals

The Urban Information Specialist Program (UISP) explicitly declared that the librarian in the role of "information interpreter" should strive not to be a neutral facilitator of access to services, but rather a conscious advocate whose "stance with agencies obliged to provide information is an aggressive one."[61] The information interpreter should seek to increase community knowledge and skills, because a "community's prospects for control over its own life situation is heightened or reduced by the extent to which it has information needed to make judgments and then to act on them."[62] As librarians were to be active interpreters of information, patrons were also expected to be decision makers capable of using their own discernment. For instance, a course on the

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57   Ibid; Hage, "More High John," 3416.

58   Ibid.

59   Robert B. Croneberger and James C. Welbourne, Jr. ,"Triumph & Tragedy: A Play in Two Acts," *Library Journal* 95, no. 9 (1970): 1705–1708; Hage, "More High John," 3416–3418.

60   John C. Colson, "The Agony of Outreach: Some Reconsiderations Based on the High John Project," *Library Journal* 98, no. 17 (1973): 2818, 2820.

61   Welbourne, *First Year*, 23.

62   Ibid, 19, 23.

media offered not only an analysis of media bias, but strategies for community residents to get media outlets to fairly represent their point of view.[63]

James Welbourne—who had been part of High John, was hired by the SLIS to increase Black student recruitment, and would later become UISP director—noted that the difficulties at High John had taught them that the typical library student was not suited for this kind of work and stressed the importance of admitting students with previous life and work experience in "the ghetto community."[64] More explicitly than most other LIS program administrators, Welbourne and Bundy were staunch critics of institutionalized racism within education, and expressed frustration that Black students were under pressure by skeptical White educators to prove their academic qualifications, that Black students found themselves in an educational system that "rules out the values, interests, and needs of [their] people."[65] The UISP explicitly sought to recruit more Black students, increased financial aid, and waived the requirement of a bachelor's degree for admission. Eleven of the seventeen students accepted to the UISP were Black and six White, resulting in the admission of more Black students than any library school other than Atlanta University (as Welbourne noted, this milestone was "a result more of the failure of other library schools than [of] the success of Maryland.")[66]

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63 Welbourne, "Training Urban Information Specialists," 106.

64 James Welbourne, *The Urban Information Specialist Program: First Year*, (College Park, MD: University of Maryland School of Library and Information Services, 1971); John Colson to Charles E. Bishop, November 22, 1970, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

65 Mary Lee Bundy and James Welbourne, "Notes on Institutional Racism to Guide a Discussion with the Faculty of the School of Library and Information Services, on October 29, 1970", School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

66 Bundy et al., *Urban Information Specialist Project*, 6, 11; James Welbourne, *The Urban Information Specialist Program: First Year*, (College Park, MD: University of Maryland School of Library and Information Services, 1971): 3; Welbourne, James, "Statement Prepared for the Caucus of Black Librarians at the American Library Association's 89th Convention, Detroit 1970: A Black Position Paper on White Racism in Library Education," included as attachment to memorandum from Mary Lee Bundy to J. Colson, J. Donohue, Robert Haro, Larry Heilprin, Jerry Kidd, James Liesener, E. Colson, E. Warner, and Paul Wasserman, July 6, 1970, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

UISP Student Proposals

Rather than working part-time at a library or social agency, UISP students took an applied research methods course and then designed summer projects in which they were expected to "articulate a ghetto problem, design a solution, and write a proposal for testing it during the summer months."[67] Instead of taking place in a library, projects could be tied to an inner-city college, a labor union, or any other group where community members could be reached.[68]

In the introduction to a published collection of the UISP students' action-research proposals, the author (unnamed, but most likely Mary Lee Bundy) located the roots of the problems of poverty outside the community, condemning the employment market, the public educational system, exploitation by landlords, "a punitive and coercive criminal justice system," and pervasive anti-Black racism.[69] Black people were "continually spied on by the various agencies which attempt to control them, and their leaders, followed and watched. Mind control by means of brain operations in(sic) only the next step… The potential of urban based information centers in overcoming this adverse information situation, are(sic) several."[70] Each of the proposals challenged traditional reference work either in terms of purpose, source of information, method of dissemination, and/or the librarian's role as interpreter.

Teen researchers. Cheryl Marshall proposed training teenagers as community researchers in two low-income neighborhoods in Montclair, New Jersey. The teens would receive training on people's rights to information, the "dynamics of poverty and racism," and "ways of gaining access to desired information." The teens would conduct five weeks of research via questionnaires and interviews with officials, as well as "'rapping' [with the] 'man in the streets'" (without taking notes, because of an endemic distrust of surveys). The researchers would learn the rights one had if ar-

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67   Ibid, 104; Welbourne, *The Urban Information Specialist Program*, 5–6.

68   Ibid., 22.

69   Urban Information Specialists, *Community Information Programs*, 3.

70   Ibid., 1–2. Given revelations of the era, including FBI surveillance of Black militant groups, and the exposé in 1972 of forty years of deception and exploitation through the Tuskegee Study, speculation about mind-control surgery may not have struck politically aware readers as far-fetched.

rested, how to file complaints, and how bail worked. They would not only look up housing codes, but translate them into clear language, and ask tenants whether or not code violations were in fact usually corrected. Finally, they would write and publish a manual with their findings and distribute it within the city.[71]

Consciousness-raising for Black high school students. Alfred Nero proposed a "re-educational" program for the young people in his neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, where he wanted to create a "street-oriented community base" for information interpreters to "reach and teach in non-traditional, non-academic ways" about welfare rights, health, and above all, Black history and pride. Although he wanted information interpreters to tell people about practical matters such as job opportunities and legal assistance, his project focused on consciousness-raising, including the study of African religions and Black history, in order to "restore the essence of respect and pride in Blackness which present educational programs attempt to obliterate." Although his principles were strongly outlined, pragmatic considerations were skimpy: he allowed for only two weeks of outreach, and although he intended to implement telephone reference for elderly shut-ins, hospital patients, and incarcerated people, he outlined no plan to let these groups know about the program.[72]

Union information service. Although it was not published with the other proposals, and thus fewer details survive, one student proposed that an information center be attached to the union for which she was an organizer, in order to respond "to the needs which the public library was not answering" and serve as a place for organizing.[73]

Welfare rights information center. Anthony Miller's proposal, the most developed of those published, directly connected reference to social action groups and explicitly raised the purpose of collective action over individual benefit. The National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO), which existed from 1966–1975, included over 300 local groups in its network. Members were welfare or ex-welfare recipients, while organizers were either from the community or arrived via student organizing, the civil rights movement, or programs such as the Peace Corps and VISTA. Information

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71 Cheryl Marshall, "A Project to Retrieve Community Information for Dissemination to Community Workers through the Use of Teenage Researchers," in Urban Information Specialists. *Community Information Programs*, 11, 16–18, 20.

72 Ibid., 25–28.

73 Welbourne, "Training Urban Information Specialists," 105.

interpreters in the proposed center would seek out data to directly support local WRO actions. Reference sources would include census data, newsletters, interviews with community people, lists of social agencies and activist groups, NWRO literature, city council minutes, news clippings, and more. Blurring the line between organizer and librarian, the information interpreter in Miller's plan was also charged with framing collective solutions. Miller noted that although welfare recipients had "a painfully clear picture of what the problems are and how they affect his or her family," they often had less detailed analyses of systemic causes and potential collective solutions.[74]

All the student proposals set very ambitious goals for a summer-long project. Unfortunately, no documentation has apparently survived that chronicles the results.

UISP: Reflections on the First Year, Dashed Hopes for the Second

In 1971, James Welbourne issued a public report on the UISP's first year, intended to serve as an advocacy tool. The program was in danger of not being funded again and his team wanted to rally support from the library field. While touting the ideals of the program, Welbourne also admitted challenges, the overarching one being how to translate the program's ideals into reality in order to "make the connection between information access and the solution of ghetto problems." They had found that some course content had been too theoretical, and recommended tying readings to more concrete cases the following year. Welbourne also alluded to White students whose disenchantment with the political establishment neither guaranteed their commitment to inner city communities, nor inoculated them from "expectancy of favored treatment because of their race," and described conflict within the SLIS because some faculty could not adjust when "a white liberal project became, as it should have, a ghetto, largely black oriented project."[75]

Unfortunately, the UISP did not have a chance to address their self-identified challenges in a second year. Instead, a long, bitter battle

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74   Anthony Miller, "A Project to Design a Model for a Welfare Rights Information Center." In Urban Information Specialists, *Community Information Programs*, 36, 38–39, 44, 48, 56.

75   Welbourne, *First Year* 1, 28, 30–34.

within the SLIS over funding and administration shut it down. Hefty files of memos and letters from all parties are thick with blame in all directions. Did the UISP die because the SLIS administrators were still in the "help the unserved" mentality, unwilling to evolve to an empowerment mind-set? Did they kill it, as Bundy and Welbourne would later charge, out of sheer racist opposition to its goals?[76] Welbourne had already accused the SLIS of deliberately hiring less qualified White candidates over Black candidates, and of undermining its own efforts to increase Black recruitment.[77] Two condescending racial insults can be found in existing correspondence, one from a faculty member who called Welbourne "a poor Black who has been misused—befuddled and egged into 'racist' attacks" by Bundy, and a patronizing remark from the vice chancellor describing Welbourne as "an able and increasingly militant Black" (as for Bundy, both men described her on separate occasions as "brilliant but erratic", with the faculty member also calling her "an acid-tongued middle-aged spinster").[78]

In addition, we cannot know about microaggressions in faculty meetings, or insulting tones of voice, or too-easily provoked skepticism about the program based on its leaders' identities, or even how much more passionately the university's letters of support might have been written in

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76   Mary Lee Bundy, "The Disgrace at Maryland: A Paper Presented at the Urban Information Specialist Program Evaluation Conference," August 24–25, 1971; Welbourne, "A Charge with Regard to the School of Library and Information Services," n.d.; Bundy and Welbourne, "Notes on Institutional Racism"; James Welbourne, "Statement Prepared for the Caucus of Black Librarians at the American Library Association's 89th Convention, Detroit 1970: A Black Position Paper on White Racism in Library Education, With Particular Reference to the Black Recruitment Program at the School of Library and Information Services at the University of Maryland," attachment to July 6 1970 letter from Mary Lee Bundy to J. Colson, J. Donohue, Robert Haro, Larry Heilprin, Jerry Kidd, James Liesener, E. Olson, E. Warner, and Paul Wasserman, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

77   James Welbourne to George Callcott, July 30, 1970; Welbourne, "Statement Prepared for the Caucus of Black Librarians", School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

78   Lawrence Heilprin to Charles Bishop, June 8, 1971; George Callcott to Louis Kaplan, September 10, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

the program's defense had it been led by White men, or had it not included so many Black students. The daily manifestations of racism against women and men of color, and of sexism against women of all races, often pass without being documented, and there is no reason to believe that the SLIS was so far ahead of its time as to be ahead of our own time as well, into some utopian era free of all consciously or unconsciously perpetuated patriarchy and White supremacy.

That said, within the reams of surviving correspondence among university administrators, except for the quotes above, there are no other explicit racial insults, and there is consistently stated support for the goals of the UISP both within the department and from the federal funders, who praised the goal of increasing minority recruitment and of developing more relevant information programs for urban communities as the two strongest aspects of the UISP proposal.[79]

What is heavily documented in the SLIS correspondence is the administrators' exasperation with UISP leaders on a personal level (particularly with Bundy), and accusations that Welbourne and Bundy were overly antagonistic to their peers, insulting to the institution upon which their program depended for survival, and even guilty of placing "personal aggrandizement" above the hard work of planning and maintaining a sustainable program.[80] One professor claimed the UISP's charges of racism were offered as excuses to avoid criticism of the program, while another expressed support for the program's goals while denouncing the "gross verbal abuse" and "threats of political and academic reprisal" aimed at any faculty who questioned the specifics of the program.[81]

When it came to the funds requested by the UISP for its second year, Burton Lamkin, the federal officer responsible for handling their grant,

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79   Ray Fry to Wilson Elkins, n.d. [received June 24, 1971], School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD

80   John Colson to Charles Bishop, December 16, 1970, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD

81   J.S. Kidd to Charles Bishop, December 3, 1970; Colson to Bishop, December 16, 1970; Heilprin to Bishop, June 8, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD

noted that the amount requested was one-third of his office's entire national budget for library employment grants, even though two previously funded projects under Bundy's leadership had failed to comply with basic reporting requirements and data retention.[82] A hastily revised budget from Welbourne (shifting most budget "cuts" from the government to the university) included the hiring of Bundy's brother and questionably high expenses for 60 day-trips for Bundy and another faculty member.[83] An SLIS administrator later said that Lamkin had privately blamed the "irresponsible leadership" of the UISP for his unwillingness to fund them at the levels requested.[84]

The tone of negotiations deteriorated. Bundy demanded that an acting dean save the UISP although the library school "neither deserves nor has earned the right to have" it.[85] Welbourne made unfounded promises to potential UISP faculty that the university would pay their salaries if the grant were to fall through and called on a local congressman to denounce the University, even though he knew it had supported the grant's renewal.[86] The UISP issued a press release charging racism as the sole reason that

82   Burton Lamkin to Charles Bishop, March 29, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD

83   James C. Welbourne to George Callcott, November 30, 1970; Welbourne, "A Charge", School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program, Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD

84   George H. Callcott to Margaret E. Chisholm, August 16, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

85   Mary Lee Bundy to James W. Liesener, July 14, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program. Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

86   George Callcott to James Welbourne, August 9, 1971; Mitchell, Parren J. press conference statement included as attachment in James Welbourne to C.E. Bishop, June 14, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program, Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD

the program was not refunded.[87] Welbourne's tone, once courteous, began to echo Bundy's, calling the UISP the "only sound intellectual and professional part" of the SLIS, as the rest of the library school was—he said he was quoting another, unnamed, faculty member—"a bag of shit."[88]

By the end of the summer, the OE had offered a reduced amount of funding, the SLIS had insisted on more control over the UISP as a condition of renewal, and the UISP had rejected both. Bundy asked for and received a sabbatical, and Welbourne was hired back for one year with no promise of further renewal.[89]

The ugly implosion of the UISP, which had held so much promise in its outstandingly bold foray into community-action-based reference and its incisive critique of White middle-class librarianship, is a disappointment for contemporary progressive librarians in search of inspiration from history. The fight left each side exhausted and obstinate. The aftermath dragged on into the next school year, but Bundy moved on to her next project, publishing reference works for social change.

Publishing for Radical Reference: Urban Information Interpreters, Inc.

Urban Information Interpreters, Inc. (UIII), formed in 1971 while the UISP was struggling to survive, was, briefly, a publisher of radical reference materials. Institutional tax documents and board minutes show that although UIII referred to itself in the collective, it was very much Mary Lee Bundy's project, with some participation from her brother Robert Bundy,

87 "Press Release: Black Faculty and Students of the Urban Information Specialist Program Charge White University of Maryland Officials with Racism and Violations of Civil Rights", August 27, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program, Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD

88 James C. Welbourne to George Callcott, July 30, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program, Office of the Chancellor Records, Series 4.1, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD

89 Margaret Chisholm to James C. Welbourne, August 24, 1971; James W. Liesener to James C. Welbourne, May 3, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program, Office of the Chancellor records, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD.

a man named Irving Gilchrist, and, in the beginning, James Welbourne.[90] The introduction to the UIII-published collection of UISP student proposals declared that "[t]here is no rationale to support Whites controlling funding for urban information programs, or managing them once in operation," and renounced any role for library schools in "preparing Whites as urban information workers, i.e., to work with the 'disadvantaged' [because] White professionals will be trusted to protect the White system… We are saying to White professionals, managers and federal bureaucrats… You are not competent to make these decisions and should remove yourselves from any involvement in urban information affairs."[91] This separatist argument would have been more straightforward if the main author of all the UIII works had not been a White woman (and the main federal bureaucrat handling the UISP request, Burton Lamkin, had not been an African American man, who was himself a demographic-breaking research librarian).[92] There is no record of Bundy ever addressing the questions raised by her own spearheading of urban information efforts, including those raised by the UISP's proposed second year budget, which would have given her, a White woman, a considerably higher salary than James Welbourne, the Black man who had taken over as director since the first semester: her $23,638 to his $16,500 (in 2017 dollars, $142,180 to $99,246).[93]

Regardless of any contradictions we might discern between her espoused ideology and certain of her own actions, Bundy's reference publication project was unquestionably the result of an immense amount of dedicated research and work, and extended her vision of reference's potential for fueling social change. She proposed transforming library reference collections, turning departments of "fine arts, social science, business and

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90   Urban Information Interpreters, Inc. Archives, Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland Libraries.

91   Urban Information Specialists, *Community Information Programs*, 9–10

92   "Speaking of People," *Ebony* 15, no. 12 (October 1960): 6.

93   James Welbourne to Charles Bishop, August 16, 1971, School of Library and Information Services—Urban Information Specialist Program, Office of the Chancellor records, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD. Note that the average professor's salary in 1972 ranged from $12,032–$19,191. "Average Salary of Full-Time Instructional Faculty on 9-month Contracts in Institutions of Higher education, By Academic Rank, Sex, and Control and Type of Institution: 1970–71 to 1994–95" [table]; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI Inflation Calculator.

technology" into departments of "welfare, housing, health, education, labor, the system of justice, and politics and government," and intended to publish the kind of reference work that could live in such departments.[94] UIII included a mission statement in the front of several of their books, which read in part:

> U.I.I.I.'s principal attack on poverty, racism and repression in the social system, is through information access [and] serves an educational function by providing education in a range of relevant information skills for community organizers and others involved in effecting social change.

> U.I.I.I. is, and intends to be, at the fore of changes which will enhance the power of people over institutions and so the prospects for meaningful change in the political and economic circumstances of the urban poor.[95]

UIII publications included directories and bibliographies meant to serve community-based groups as well as librarians. For librarians in the Internet age, it takes effort to recall or comprehend how hard it was in the early 1970s for small activist groups to find one another, particularly when few would have had the budget or time for extensive travel or research beyond their own urgent, immediate campaigns. Although other superficially similar directories had been published, they focused on service providers, not activist groups, which often could only find each other by word of mouth, a kind of networking which had much greater geographical limitations at the time.[96]

Publications included *The National Prison Directory* (two volumes, 1975 and 1979), *The Guide to the Literature of Social Change* (1977), *The National Children's Directory* (1977), *The National Civil Rights Directory* (1979), and nine shorter works (possibly mimeographed pamphlets; it is

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94   Bundy, "Urban Information and Public Libraries," 166.

95   Urban Information Interpreters and Mary Lee Bundy, *The National Prison Directory: a Prison Reform Organizational and Resource Directory* (College Park, MD: Urban Information Interpreters, 1979), front matter.

96   Bundy, Mary Lee, and Irvin Gilchrist, *The National Civil Rights Directory: An Organizations Directory* (College Park, MD: Urban Information Interpreters, 1979).

unclear if any exemplars survive) published between 1972–1973 that were "relevant to the development of urban information service."[97]

The prison directories compiled information about 700 prison reform groups that held a sweeping range of goals, including the abolition of the death penalty, a moratorium on prison construction, community based alternatives to imprisonment, sexual assault in prisons, and the fight against repressive legislation in Congress. Groups ranged from COYOTE (advocating for sex workers' rights), to I&R centers focused on criminal justice, to prison committees that belonged to the Black Panther Party, the National Council of Churches, and state Bar associations.[98]

The National Children's Directory defined children as a powerless, oppressed group, noting that poor, minority, female, and/or gay children faced additional discrimination and disadvantages. In addition to listing entities from students' rights groups to organizations fighting sex stereotypes in children's media to manuals explaining how to start one's own school, to the child labor branch of the US Department of Labor, the book included a bibliography of over 300 reference sources "prepared especially for citizen action groups" and essays on children's rights.[99]

The Guide to the Literature of Social Change noted the shift in the 1970s away from street protests toward organizing people so that they could leverage existing laws and use litigation, watchdogging, and electoral politics to effect change. As such, the book presented "publications that serve to guide people in their efforts to form groups and to develop their programs, sustain themselves economically and successfully undertake social change action."[100] The book was meant as an acquisitions tool for reference librarians, and as a means for groups to connect to each other. It listed publications from full-length books about community organizing strate-

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97   Urban Information Specialists, *Community Information Programs*, front matter.

98   Urban Information Interpreters, Mary Lee Bundy and Kenneth R. Harmon eds., *The National Prison Directory: Organizational Profiles of Prison Reform Groups in the United States: Base Volume*. (College Park, MD: Urban Information Interpreters,1975): 17–27.

99   Urban Information Interpreters, Mary Lee Bundy and Rebecca Glen Whaley eds., *The National Children's Directory*. College Park, MD: Urban Information Interpreters. 1977): 1–4, 37–38.

100   Urban Information Interpreters, *Guide to the Literature of Social Change, Vol. 1,* (College Park, MD: Urban Information Interpreters, Inc., 1977): 1.

gies to small pamphlets like one from the People's Law School in San Francisco explaining how to access local government records.[101]

The National Civil Rights Directory—which included a range of groups from the Puerto Rican Studies Department of John Jay College, to county-level human rights commissions, to Boricua College, to Pacifica radio station WBAI—decried the "myth that things are getting better for racial minorities in the United States," given endemic police brutality and other forms of racial injustice.[102]

One difficulty in compiling these directories must have been how quickly groups formed, changed, and died. Comparing the two volumes of the prison book, one can see that many groups had gone defunct in the intervening four years, while others had changed addresses or were absorbed into other institutions.[103] Some groups were also reluctant, in an age of COINTELPRO harassment of activists, to be listed in a directory "which could readily be used by those interests with a stake in perpetuating inequality."[104] As valuable as the directories might have been in this era, updating and publishing them with a small team (especially one with a poor track record of managing funds) was not a sustainable venture, and like the UISP and High John before it, UIII had a relatively short life.

Implications for Today

Over the past decade, an increasingly intersectional critique of librarianship and library school education, and their complicity with White supremacy, patriarchy, neoliberalism, and other forms of oppressive hegemony has emerged.[105] A full discussion of advances made (and not made)

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101   Urban Information Interpreters, *Guide to the Literature of Social Change*, 2, 5–7, 10.

102   Bundy and Gilchrist, *National Civil Rights Directory*, i.

103   Urban Information Interpreters, *National Prison Directory*, 1.

104   Bundy and Gilchrist, *National Civil Rights Directory*, i, iii.

105   See: regular Twitter discussions using the hashtag #critlib; the 2016 Symposium on Critical Library Pedagogy held in Tucson, Arizona; critlib unconferences held before the 2015 and 2017 national ACRL conferences; books published by Library Juice Press*;* online journals such as *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*; etc.

since the 1970s is beyond the scope of this chapter.[106] However, the experiences of the urban library education programs of the early 1970s yield some direct lessons to those of us who yet believe that information can be power, that a collective benefit yields more lasting change than solving individual problems, and that we should examine how LIS programs can inculcate the idea of socially transformative reference.

Institutional collaboration. Current notions of the importance of marrying theory to action in praxis may encourage us to bring back to LIS education the idea of ideologically framed fieldwork, perhaps in community-based organizations. The urban LIS programs of the 1970s found that collaborations with public libraries and service agencies were, however, fraught with questions of territory and authority. Library schools and students often made the mistake of charging into existing institutions in a directive capacity, if not outright replacing local staff, and collaborative initiatives reliant on external grant funding were by nature short-lived, leaving students hanging and communities shortchanged. Any LIS program that would place students into local institutions should proceed with complete respect for their partners and a clear and realistic plan for long-term sustainability.

Student experience of fieldwork. Middle class White students had a difficult time functioning in low-income minority neighborhoods, and although students in some programs reported that the fieldwork prepared them well, the benefit was less clear to the agencies and communities they were meant to serve. Increased recruitment of students of color—a challenge that continues four decades later—might help reduce overt cultural conflicts, although an awareness of intersectionality and of the spectrum of individual experience and personality should also preclude the assumption that all library students of color will be instantly culturally competent in all communities of color. Any LIS programs placing any students in the field should work with their partners to determine how placements will benefit the community, not only the students, and establish clear expectations for students' roles and responsibilities, with both support and a plan of corrective action if students fail to interact appropriately or contribute positively.

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106   Current scholarship on social justice in LIS education includes Nicole A. Cooke's recently published *Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals* as well as the anthology *Teaching for Justice: Implementing Social Justice in the LIS Classroom.*

Creating a radical program within an existing LIS school. Although the UISP founders' post-mortem message was that their program was simply killed by racism, an analysis of the existing correspondence suggests that—whatever implicit or explicit racism existed at the University—there was also a deep unwillingness on the part of the program's directors to fulfill promises made in exchange for money or to compromise on any budget or administrative item. Any question of the program's methods or accounting was immediately denounced as an ideological attack. Publicly demonizing the flawed institutional hand that feeds you may generate some personal satisfaction, but may also lead to a short life for the program. As progressive or radical librarians driven by our ideals, we must be self-reflective enough to recognize that possessing a just aim does not bless every decision we make as perfect, nor does it exempt us from treating colleagues with the respect we demand for ourselves, nor immunize us against the self-interest that can infect any human being, no matter how brilliant or righteous.

Information power reference beyond libraries. Librarianship no longer fears being made obsolete by I&R centers, but by Google and the open web. The role that Major Owens outlined for librarians—finding and organizing information that non-professionals could not—has become less clear in an age in which non-librarians are also adept at finding and compiling information. Still, our libraries, with their public platforms, can share and amplify the work of others, from grassroots political strategy groups like Indivisible to mass movements like Black Lives Matter. In this age of the Trump administration and a host of movements organizing for resistance across the country, we should take every opportunity to help disseminate information that can further the collective struggle for increasing social justice.

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