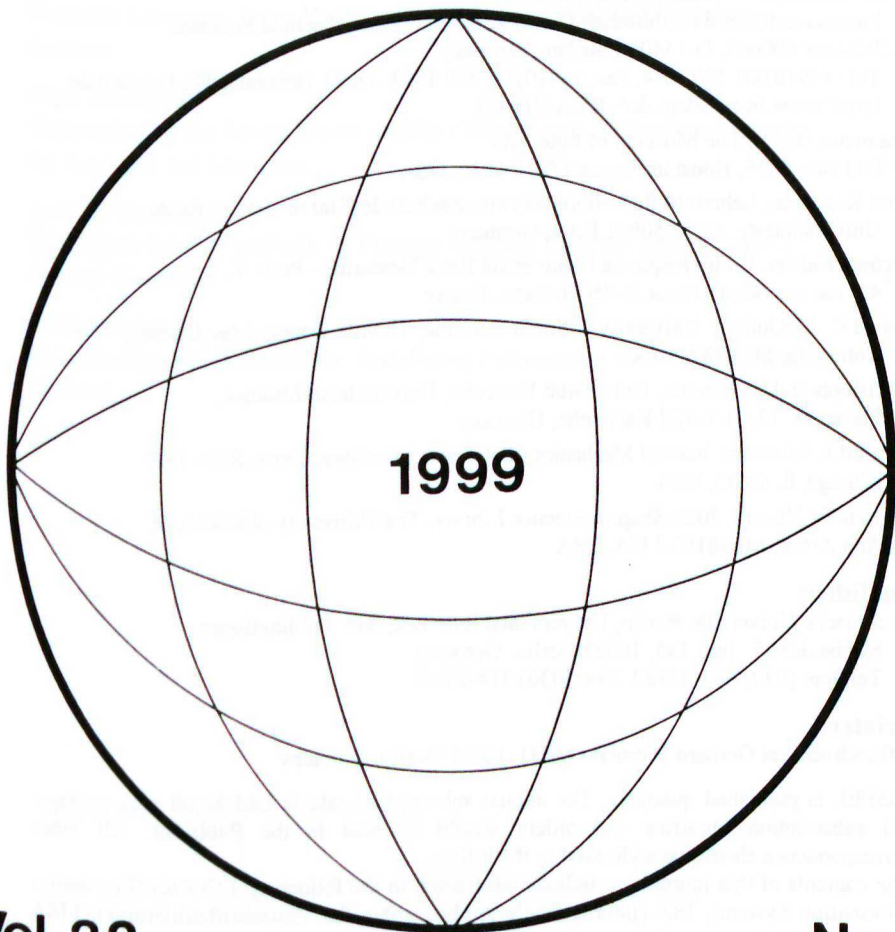


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Editorial Board:

Hans-Christoph Hobohm (Editor in chief)

Fachbereich Archiv-Bibliothek-Dokumentation, Fachhochschule Potsdam,
PO-Box 600608, D-14406 Potsdam, Germany.
Tel.: +49 (0)331 580 1514, Fax: +49 (0)331 580 1599; e-mail: Hobohm@FH-Potsdam.de
<http://www.fh-potsdam.de/~IFLA/INSPEL>

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Kaiserstr. 12, D-76128 Karlsruhe, Germany

Edward J. Valauskas, Internet Mechanics, 5050 South Lake Shore Drive, Suite 3214
Chicago, IL 60615, USA

Patricia B. Yocum, 3026 Shapiro Science Library, The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1185, USA

Publisher:

Technische Universität Berlin, Universitätsbibliothek, Abt. Publikationen,
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A REVIEW OF PRIVATISATION*

By Edward J. Valauskas

Abstract: Privatisation and outsourcing provide both opportunities and threats to libraries, especially libraries in governments around the world. Creative and intelligent understanding of the role of libraries within organizations, with plenty of quantitative evidence to support the key roles of the staff and collections, will prove the best tonic for survival.

Introduction

Privatisation, outsourcing - these words have taken a weighty and almost frightening connotation for librarians around the world in the past twenty years. Both words have become part of the vocabularies of managers and staff as part of a language that stresses efficiency, profitability, and end results. What opportunities and threats are offered by privatisation and outsourcing? This paper will provide an overview to the issues, and discuss briefly some strategies provided by this sort of administrative and bureaucratic change.

What is Privatisation?

Privatisation is simply the full or partial transfer of government responsibility for certain activities to the private sector. Although privatisation appeared on the horizon most recently in 1979, it is not new to this generation of government officials. Adam Smith in 1776 proposed the sale of government properties and lands as a stimulus to the economies of every country in Europe, thereby producing a reduction in public debt and increasing overall productivity¹ More recently, the seeds for privatisation were planted in the 1960s by Peter Drucker when he argued in his book *The Age of Discontinuity* that the purpose of government was to govern, a role that made it unfit to perform certain tasks better left to business². Drucker's comments on government inefficiency were heard by some (the first appearance of the word privatisation in Great Britain occurred in a

* Paper presented at the 64th IFLA General Conference August 16 - August 21, 1998 in Amsterdam

¹ Adam Smith is quoted in Alzira Salama, 1995. *Privatization: Implications for Corporate Culture Change*. Aldershot, Eng.: Avebury, pp. 3-4

² Colin Chapman, 1990. *Selling the Family Silver: Has Privatization Worked?* London: Hutchinson Business Books, pp. 10-15.

pamphlet in May, 1970), but it was not until 1979 with Margaret Thatcher's promise to "roll back the frontiers of the state" that the word "privatisation" took on its decidedly modern connotation³.

Since 1979, privatisation has become a global phenomenon for several reasons. Politicians have made it a priority to demonstrate to their constituents their interests in reducing the sheer size of government at all levels, from national to local. The public has grown tired of repeated increases in taxes and other governmental fees, and has demanded that governments look for new and alternative sources of income. Politicians, bureaucrats and the public are interested in government agencies that are efficient and productive -- meeting the needs of all -- with minimal waste and paperwork. In certain countries, privatisation reflects a change in political philosophies and provides a means to translate change into new opportunities. It has been estimated that at least 7,000 different state enterprises around the world have been privatised since 1979⁴. Between 1985 and 1993, governments in 100 countries earned some \$328 billion in the sale of public enterprises to investors⁵.

The actual form of privatisation varies from state to state. In some cases, public services are simply slashed under the assumption that the private sector will take over. In other cases, the budgets of government agencies are cut in the hope that they will seek private funding. Sometimes, the costs for public service are passed directly to the public with new fees, with the expectation that the services will generate the income requisite if they are really needed. In other instances, public tasks are transferred directly to the private sector or joint ventures are developed between specific government agencies and certain businesses. Finally, on a few occasions, there is no sale or transfer of properties to the private sector, but just an encouragement within a given government agency - under the threat of privatisation - of the managerial notions of the private sector, with an emphasis on efficiency, profitability and customer satisfaction⁶.

The motives for privatisation are not always clear. Certainly, many politicians argue in favor of privatisation for ideological reasons, believing that the public is

³ Salama, p. 5.

⁴ Salama, p. 4.

⁵ Vincent Wright, 1994. "Industrial Privatization in Western Europe: Pressures, Problem and Paradoxes," In: Vincent Wright (editor). *Privatization in Western Europe: Pressures, Problem and Paradoxes*. London: Pinter, p. 1.

⁶ John Vickers and Vincent Wright, 1989. "The Politics of Industrial Privatisation in Western Europe: An Overview," In: John Vickers and Vincent Wright (editors). *The Politics of Industrial Privatisation in Western Europe*. London: Frank Cass, p. 3.

better served by choice rather than government monopolies. Others argue in favor of privatisation on economic grounds, that all public services are intrinsically less efficient than those offered by businesses. This interpretation of government as an economic black hole, of course, ignores the contributions of government agencies to society as a whole, contributions which do not easily translate to a spreadsheet⁷. These ideological and economic motives are not the only reasons for an interest in privatisation. For some, a move to privatisation is a managerial decision. Privatisation breaks up government fiefdoms, reducing battles between warring bureaucracies over limited financial and other resources, and reduces the threats of public enterprises to the careers of politicians. Privatisation has always carried this political context, but there has also been a financial angle, too. Reducing deficits, cutting personnel costs, developing new sources of income, these are important considerations for every politician considering privatisation⁸.

What is Outsourcing?

Outsourcing is the transfer of some function or activity within an organisation to a third-party⁹. The reasoning behind outsourcing is simple: provide opportunities for select tasks within an organisation to be completed with an improved efficiency and at less cost. Outsourcing can take several forms but often it accompanies technological changes within an organisation; new computer systems, software, and other digital tools alter the dynamics of the workplace. As an organisation evolves with new technologies, outside parties are brought in to assist in the process, accelerating the mapping of routines and resources to new techniques.

Outsourcing has both benefits and costs. Transformational outsourcing - when an organisation alters its fundamental habits - generally proves to be less expensive in terms of manpower and equipment costs. It also assists in the consolidation of different units or components within an organisation, providing the means to cut duplication of tasks. Outsourcing also means loss of control and a change in management and administration. Another group is legally required to do tasks once handled internally, and this act of contracting out is risky and difficult to reverse. There may be new and unexpected costs as a result of the act of outsourcing and it may be impossible to evaluate properly the impact of this

⁷ Paul Starr, 1987. *The Limits of Privatization*. Washington, D. C.: Economic Policy Institute, p. 3.

⁸ Vickers and Wright, pp. 5-8.

⁹ Daniel Minoli, 1995. *Analyzing Outsourcing: Reengineering Information and Communication Systems*. New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 1.

reassignment of specific tasks on the day-to-day activities of an organisation. Finally, there's always the possibility that decisions made by an outside agency may not always be in the best interests of a given organisation, say in terms of technology or new routines¹⁰.

Outsourcing has enormous effects on management, and sometimes these effects cannot be predicted properly. One survey of top executives found "extensive ignorance" about outsourcing, in spite of the fact that more than 20 percent were considering outsourcing as an option for their organisations¹¹. Any group considering outsourcing should first examine the potential impact of such a decision, for there can be considerable advantages and disadvantages for any organisation. Once the decision has been made to outsource a specific task or unit, a careful evaluation should occur of all potential contractors, with a careful examination of experience and results with other clients. Once a contractor has been selected, a well-written contract is needed, protecting the interests of the organisation outsourcing work to another party. Finally, numerous mechanisms should be in place to monitor the progress of work over time, to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the organisation in terms of quality and efficiency.

Opportunities and Threats

Privatisation has developed a history in the past two decades that give us an opportunity to evaluate realistically some of its promises and claims. The World Bank, a supporter of privatisation, has tried to analyse the impact of privatisation. It is a difficult task because privatisation has had varying effects on both governments and businesses. The World Bank found that privatisation enhances efficiency but not because of the often cited superiority of the corporate world. Public agencies that have privatised into sectors where there is intense competition in a given market indeed tend to be more efficient; those public agencies privatised into less competitive environments tend to be less efficient. The World Bank also found that efficiency was closely linked to the involvement of management; more closely supervised and regulated privatized agencies were more efficient than those operated at a bureaucratic distance. Finally, the World Bank found that in the Thatcher regime in the United Kingdom, public sector productivity grew more rapidly than private sector productivity, thanks to policies that provided public managers greater opportunities to make their offices and programs more efficient¹².

¹⁰ Minoli, p. 3.

¹¹ Brian Rothery and Ian Robertson, 1995. *The Truth About Outsourcing*. Aldershot, Eng.: Gower, p. 4.

¹² Wright, pp. 32-33.

Consider the privatisation of libraries and the opportunities it provides for the creative librarian. Privatisation plans always take a great deal of time, on the scale of years. Part of the problem is valuation - how do you really establish a price for a library, its services, its contents, its connections? Information about any given unit like a library might provide some clues about performance and customer base, but that information is often a poor basis for future predictions of post-privatisation performance¹³. Privatisation means that costs for materials, personnel, and other key components change, making valuation a guessing game. These questionable factors - of time and valuation - open opportunities for those looking for ways to reverse a privatisation decision.

The prospect of outsourcing gives an organisation like a library an opportunity to evaluate specific operations and processes, to discover new routines and resources, and ultimately to allow others to do tasks that were inefficiently handled internally in a more productive manner. The first step in outsourcing requires an inventory of manpower and technology, with a careful analysis of routines and processes. The sheer act of this analysis may lead many a library to more efficient habits, and a rediscovery of skills among staff that have been ignored for various reasons. This inventory will provide a good blueprint of the strengths and weaknesses of a given unit to both staff and management, supplying plenty of opportunities for change. With this inventory in hand, a library can develop a plan to improve specific routines, take advantage of new technologies, and create new processes for handling tasks. This evaluation and development of new alternatives may have a transformational effect on a library. The threat of outsourcing may be sufficient to shake the historical blunders of the past off a department or a library and transform it into an operationally more effective organisation. It may be necessary, however, after this process to continue with the outsourcing routine, in bringing outside assistance to implement and manage new technologies and tasks.

There are those who argue that outsourcing favors vendors and an efficiency mentality over services to clients and users. Some would also argue that outsourcing is inherently dangerous, as it turns over to other organisations tasks which might be difficult to recapture. Costs reductions as a result of outsourcing may not always measure up to expectations, and the quality of work may not always meet the demands of both clients and staff. It is crucial that any outsourcing decision consider alternatives, such as multisourcing (where several partners are selected to handle certain routines, rather than one exclusive third party) and temporary outsourcing (that is, short-term assignment of routines to another group on the scale of 6 to 24 months, rather than a 5 to 10-year time

¹³ Saul Estrin, 1994. *Privatisation in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: Longman, p. 22.

scale). Insourcing - the return of outsourced services or functions to an organisation - should also be anticipated, where certain routines once assigned to an outside party are brought back into an organisation. Certainly the current trend is for outsourcing to occur at a smaller scale than a decade ago, with only very specific routines or subsets of projects assigned to an outside organisation, rather than turning over whole units or departments to others.

Strategies

Given the ample track record for privatisation for nearly 20 years, it is crucial to look for evidence to support privatisation as a viable alternative. To make this analysis work, it requires a viable comparison of similar agencies performing similar tasks for comparable clientele. Most studies that compare public and private agencies fail to account for quality of services. Most fail to analyse lower costs in terms of personnel; e. g. are those lower costs due to a greater use of part-time workers with fewer benefits?¹⁴ One survey that examined the performance of some fifty different private and public enterprises found only nine private enterprises outperforming similar public enterprises¹⁵.

Any consideration of privatisation should require all parties to provide some evidence for claims of increased efficiency and profitability. Hence, privatisation plans should detail immediate benefits to end users of a given service and describe how competition will be enhanced (since increasing competition is one of the hallmarks of most privatisation schemes). Privatisation programs in advance should fully disclose their impact on personnel, with ground rules clearly spelled out for the removal of so-called "uneconomic services"¹⁶. Privatisation often favors special interest groups, groups that will look to protect their interests by demanding government concessions that limit unprofitable service or performance standards. Catering to these groups defeats the supposed benefits of privatisation, in terms of economic gain as well in terms of efficiency and productivity¹⁷. Finally, there is this mistaken notion in privatisation that one size fits all, a notion

¹⁴ Starr, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵ Simon Domberger and John Piggott, 1994. "Privatization Policies and Public Enterprise: A Survey," In: Matthew Bishop, John Kay and Colin Mayer (editors). *Privatization and Economic Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 40.

¹⁶ Michael Beesley and Stephen Littlechild, 1986. "Privatisation: Principles, Problems and Priorities," In: John Kay, Colin Mayer and David Thompson (editors). *Privatisation and Regulation: The UK Experience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 55-56.

¹⁷ Domberger and Piggott, pp. 44-45, 56-57.

which fails to consider the wide differences in the needs of clients and patrons from one organization to another.

The prospect of outsourcing of any routine, task, or unit is an opportunity for the staff and managers of a library to prove their worth to an organisation. How? The mere act of evaluation provides a means to examine specific services and analyze their importance to clients and patrons relative to other transactions and activities¹⁸. This valuation can be used as negotiating point in contractual arrangements with potential outsourcers. Thanks to this evaluative process, a contract can be written in such a way that ties performance to fees and commissions. In the monitoring process, if a given contractor fails to meet the needs of both the library and its patrons, compensation is reduced. If the contractor exceeds the expectations of the library and its clients, compensation is increased. This sort of indexed compensation tightly links a unit within an organisation to a given contractor and provides flexibility and some control in a sometimes risky move.

A contractor has to consider its bottom line in this entire process, its profitability and its prospects for contract renewal. Most contractors will point out that they can meet their contractual obligations to an organisation because they do not have the bureaucratic burden of the parent organisation to deal with, the historical obligations to routines and employees that make some organisations less efficient¹⁹. These claims of greater efficiency and reduced bureaucracy can be used as part of a monitoring policy with a contractor. However proven methodologies that indeed reduce waste and lower bureaucratic overburden can be incorporated into an organisation; there's no reason to imagine a library as a fossilized and ineffective, unwilling to learn from another organisation merely because its goal is greater profits for its owners and shareholders. Indeed, every organisation, library or corporation, has a budget and a responsibility to efficiently use its resources well; profitability is not the exclusive domain of contractors.

Outsourcing may indeed lead to new ways of evaluating productivity and new formulae for funds. One ministry in Europe is considering linking personnel budgets to circulation statistics for academic libraries; if circulation rises compared to the average, personnel funds increase. If circulation drops below the

¹⁸ Dexter Whitfield, 1983. *Making It Public: Evidence and Action Against Privatisation*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 97-98.

¹⁹ Ronald A. Dubberly, 1998. "Wy Outsourcing is Our Friend," *American Libraries*, volume 29, number 1 (January), pp. 72-74.

average, personnel budgets drop²⁰. Some libraries may provide services for fees in some countries, and keep the fees earned (minus a charge for overhead). Outsourcing will indeed teach libraries that internal standards may not be the most appropriate, compared to those defined by patrons and clients.

Conclusion

Privatisation and outsourcing offer opportunities for libraries to prove their value to their communities in new and unexpected ways. Creative and intelligent understanding of the role of the library within an organization, with plenty of quantitative evidence to support the key position of the library and its staff and collections, will prove the best tonic for survival. Beyond the mere tabulation of statistics, vocal support for the library among its clients and users will add a human dimension to pages of graphics, text, and tables in defense of the library.

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²⁰ From: Michael von Cotta-Schönberg, 1997. "Automation and Academic Library Structure," at <http://sun1.lib.cbs.dk/people/mcs/auto.html>

"As an example, the Danish Ministry of Education is proposing a reform of the system for allocation of funds to its academic libraries in which a part of the personnel allocation will be dependent on the number of books lent: if your lending rate falls or rises less than the average rise in the academic libraries, you will get less money the next years. On the other hand, the libraries as well as other public service organisations are now allowed to earn money by performing fee-based services and to spend the money they earn, except for an overhead to the state. The only condition is that the pricing structure for services does not constitute unfair competition with private enterprises performing the same services.

The main point of this is that academic libraries may have to stop defining objectives and standards on their own terms and instead switch to the terms of the customers. Thus the gap between academic libraries as relatively market-independent service organisations and the market-dependent industrial organisations may tend to fade away."

Ronald A. Dubberly, 1998. "Why Outsourcing is Our Friend," *American Libraries*, volume 29, number 1 (January), pp. 72-74.

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Edward J. Valauskas
Internet Mechanics
5050 South Lake Shore Drive, Suite 3214
Chicago, IL 60615, USA
e-mail: ejv@uic.edu

MUCH PAIN, LITTLE GAIN: PRIVATISATION AND UK GOVERNMENT LIBRARIES*

By Suzanne Burge

Abstract: The paper begins with an account of the introduction of the concepts of privatisation and market testing in UK government libraries. It looks at a number of case studies, of the Department of Health, the Ordnance Survey, the Export Market Intelligence Centre of the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Transport, each of which illustrates different aspects of the process. It then goes on to examine government librarians' attitudes to privatisation, based on a research study carried out in 1993, and updated by a smaller study in 1996-97. It ends by considering the present situation and the effect of a change of government in the UK on the Civil Service generally and government libraries in particular.

Disclaimer

Nothing in this paper should in any way be taken as representing the views of my employer, the UK's Ombudsman. Instead I am speaking in my capacity as Chair of the Librarians Group of the Institution of Professionals, Managers and Specialists (IPMS), the union which represents government librarians. As both the title and my union office might suggest, this paper does not claim to be a detached view of the experience of market testing and privatisation in UK government libraries. I am sure that no-one who lived through the experience could be without firm views about it, but I am taking care to declare mine from the start. I should also make it clear that while I had many discussions with present and former colleagues, all the opinions (and errors) in the paper are my own, with the exception of quotes from survey respondents.

Introduction

When the idea of this paper was first mooted, in Copenhagen in 1997, the other members of the Section on Government Libraries said that it was only fitting, since it was the UK which had introduced the idea. But this is not entirely true. In a paper given at the IFLA Conference in Beijing in 1996¹, Michael Koenig set out the history of privatisation in the U.S., tracing it back to 1955. Though there were a number of moves through the intervening years, the process really began,

* Paper presented at the 64th IFLA General Conference August 16 - August 21, 1998 in Amsterdam

¹ Koenig, Michael. "User perceptions of the effect of the outsourcing of U.S. government libraries: a preliminary report." Beijing: IFLA, 1996

he said, in 1988, with a circular from the Office of Management and Budget, Enhancing Governmental Productivity², which stated that where the federal government was involved in commercial activities, these activities would be contracted out to private firms when it could be shown that this arrangement would be more cost-effective. Among the activities named as candidates for contracting out were laundry work, food preparation and serving, motorpool and vehicle maintenance, and library services.

Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979 with a strong admiration for the American way of doing things and on a manifesto committed to reducing Civil Service numbers, and throughout the 1980s American initiatives for contracting out and privatisation were eagerly adopted by ministers, but rather less rapidly introduced by civil servants. The 1988 Ibbs report, Improving Management in Government: the Next Steps³ found “an insufficient sense of urgency in the search for better value for money and steadily improving services”. For some years departments had been required by the Treasury to set up an ongoing programme of contracting work out to the private sector, but while many of the candidates mentioned in the U.S. government circular - catering, departmental transport, cleaning, routine security - had been contracted out, government libraries had survived relatively unscathed because no suitable external supplier could be found. The experience of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), cited in David Allum’s paper, Contracting out and “efficiency and effectiveness” in government libraries⁴ demonstrates this. A scrutiny of library services at DTI in 1985 had put forward three radical strategies: -

- the library could be closed and information bought from intermediaries
- the library stock could be sold to a contractor and information bought from them
- the library stock could be leased to a contractor and information bought from them.

It was assumed, with no obvious justification, that any contractor would manage the service more cost-effectively, and the argument that it would mean the loss of a national resource cut no ice at all. But it was recognised that there could be

² “Enhancing governmental productivity through competition: a new way of doing business within the government to provide quality government at least cost: a progress report on OMB Circular No. A-76, “Performance of Commercial Activities”.” Washington, D.C.: Office of Management and Budget, 1998.

³ “Improving management in government: the next steps: report to the Prime Minister / Efficiency Unit.” London: HMSO, 1988

⁴ Allum, David. “Contracting out and “efficiency and effectiveness” in government libraries.” In: Contracting out: the information issue. Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1992

dangers in engaging a firm with no track record and inexperienced staff, and the lack of any contractor prepared to show any interest clinched the decision that the library should remain in-house. Subsequent reviews of library services in other departments came to the same conclusion, but government librarians were well aware that if government policy remained unchanged there would come a point when there were likely contractors out there.

In November 1991, the Government published Competing for quality⁵ in which the words “Market testing” appeared for the first time. The Cabinet Office unit which controlled market testing defined it as the “management process whereby managers seek to achieve their objectives by systematically reviewing the components of their business, thus ensuring that services are delivered at best value for money (VFM) ...the aim is to establish whether [private sector contractors] are both able and willing to provide an equal or improved level of service more cost effectively than can be achieved in-house (i.e. improved VFM.)” The latter part of this paper, which looks at the reactions of government librarians, and offers a number of quotes from those surveyed, will suggest that they might perhaps have come up with other definitions.

The U.S. procedures for the introduction of private contractors stated that they should beat the Government by a factor of at least ten per cent to cover the costs of the changeover in order to win the contract⁶, but no such safeguard was included in the UK system. While there were numerous instructions emerging from bodies such as the Treasury’s Central Unit on Purchasing about how privatisation, contracting out, market testing (all the terms were used fairly synonymously by the majority of those involved) should be conducted, departments retained a considerable degree of autonomy. This was not surprising given that the centre, while keeping a tight hold of the purse strings, was encouraging a substantial fragmentation of the machinery of government into a multiplicity of agencies.

Case studies

As a result, each department and therefore each of their library services, went through a different range of experiences, and it seems sensible to explore different aspects of the process by looking at a range of case studies. The first of these is of the Department of Health and, as it then was, Social Security (DHSS). When it became clear that libraries were to be affected by market testing, senior management within the library decided that as the process appeared to be

⁵ Cabinet Office. “Competing for quality / buying better public services”. (Cm 1730). London: HMSO, 1991

⁶ Koenig, *ibid.*

inevitable they should move quickly. This was in part because of the then lack of competition, a situation very likely to change, but also because they felt fairly confident of the outcome and were aware of the importance this might have for others in a similar situation. The Invitation to Tender duly appeared, in four sections: management, reader services, cataloguing and ordering, with bids being invited for all or any of the services. At this point, however, the Library underwent an experience that was to become all too familiar - the goal posts suddenly shifted i.e. the ground were changed. They were told that only one bid, an in-house one, would be accepted for the first three services, but that they would not be permitted to bid for the fourth area, ordering. As their bid had been constructed as a whole, with maximum flexibility built in, this created considerable problems, but not as many as the insistence on a single bid for the very complex area of publications supply, particularly so given the long-standing arrangements between all departments and the government publisher, Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO). To an outside observer, this seemed to be a classic case of cherry-picking, selecting the one element in the bid where an outside contractor could be found, so that the Department could demonstrate to the Treasury that it was fulfilling its obligations whilst protecting the rest of the service. The DHSS contract for publications supply went to EBSCO in 1993, and substantial savings were claimed. But then it was also suggested that staff morale had been improved by the exercise.

If DHSS is an example of picking out just one part of the library service, the experience of the library at Ordnance Survey (OS) is the other end of the scale. Ordnance Survey, as its name suggests, began its life as an arm of the military, making maps for the army, but it is now a largely commercial organisation. In 1992 its library was part of Office Services Division, alongside Health and Safety, Records, Typing, Telephones, Transport, Accommodation, Security and Reprographics. (The vexed question of where to brigade libraries in government departments and agencies and the frequency with which they move from one command to another is a topic for a whole other paper.) OS decided to group the entire Division together and seek bids from facilities management companies. This posed very severe problems for a small library with only two professional staff, seeking to ensure that the interests of the library and its users were properly covered amongst a plethora of other competing claims. As the Government Libraries Journal remarked at the time “[It] raises the prospect that someone offering a really good deal on security guards could be given the job of running the library as well!”⁷

⁷ “Market testing news”. Government Libraries Journal, 3 (1), February 1993, p 6

In fact, some months later the consultants employed by OS to prepare the bid recommended that a number of areas, including the Library, should be withdrawn. The consultants suggested that it would not be possible for an outside contractor to guarantee that they could provide knowledgeable and competent staff, and that if OS felt that it needed to make savings in this area then a management review would be a more useful method of achieving this.

Reference has already been made to the scrutiny of the Department of Trade and Industry's library services in 1985, but the Department also includes the Export Market Intelligence Centre (EMIC), a business library provided by the export promotion divisions of DTI for the benefit of UK businesses researching overseas markets. While the majority of its customers are members of the public, it is a valuable resource for DTI (and the rest of government) and has close links with the Department's main Library and Information Service, with professional staff transferring back and fro, for example.

The announcement that EMIC was to be market tested came early in 1993 and staff were assured that the aim was not a drive for privatisation, but to achieve the best possible service, and a quality bid could win even if it was not necessarily the cheapest - a necessary assurance since the Minister heading the department at the time was Michael Heseltine, one of the strongest advocates of privatisation. There was a strong feeling amongst staff that the Department's (not the Library's) senior management would prefer an external contractor to win, and it was recognised that the in-house bid would inevitably involve a great deal of work, which would have to fitted in alongside the existing task of maintaining a quality service to users. Initially the work on the bid generated a strong sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment, as all staff worked together as a team, and the skills learnt and exercised contributed to everyone's personal development and job satisfaction. However the greatly increased workload created a high level of stress (including one case of long term sick leave), and the lack of confidence in the objectivity of those who would be making the decision meant that as time wore on the many of the positive aspects were lost. Staff who would normally expect to move between posts in EMIC and DTI's main library service found themselves locked in to what seemed to a lost cause, and this increased their sense of isolation. Rumours were rife - that late bids were being solicited from other sources because it looked as if the in-house one might win, that the chair of the committee openly supported the cheapest bid even though it did not meet a majority of the criteria set out in the tender document. By now the other contractors who had not existed in the eighties and at the beginning of the nineties were around, though interestingly they were largely public sector or former public sector organisations rather than private enterprise. Of the six invited to bid, only three eventually did so, the in-house

team, the British Library's Science Reference and Information Service (SRIS) and a joint bid by the Institute of Export & Business and Trade Statistics Ltd. As the bids were under consideration individual members of the Steering Committee let it be known that they would prefer an external bidder to win, and library staff came to feel that every time the Committee regretfully came up with the conclusion that the decision should go in-house, the goal posts were moved and the Committee was sent back to try and come up with the *right* answer.

The decision, finally announced in Spring 1994, went to the in-house team but with a sting in the tail - summarised somewhat bitterly by one disillusioned EMIC member as "You may have won - against my better judgement, - but you're going to be made to contract out the most interesting bits of the work to the those same external bidders who failed to win the contract!" Under the process called partnering, very new at the time, but now much more widespread, EMIC was tasked with exploring working together with the unsuccessful bidders to offer new or innovative services to customers, with the core service being provided by the in-house team.

The final example I want to consider is that of the Department of Transport (DoT). The Department has had a chequered history. Though once separate, the Departments of Environment and Transport had been combined for a number of years before being once again split apart at the beginning of 1994. The original intention had been to create two separate library services, and work had begun on this, when senior management at the Department of Transport decided to take the first of the options contained in the 1985 DTI scrutiny, that of closing the library and buying in services. They called in external consultants, and as a result of their recommendations, the stock was largely disposed of, publications budgets devolved to divisions and purchasing outsourced, and a contract signed with British Library (BL) to provide an information service, based on one professional librarian, employed by BL on a casual basis. For some time the Department of the Environment's Library continued to provide a service to Transport's users, so they were to a degree cushioned from the full impact of the decision, but this could not last. It is noticeable that, though senior management at DoT claimed the experiment had been highly successful, now the departments have once again been combined in the Departments of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) normal library services are swiftly being resumed - though of course neither the stock or the staff expertise lost can ever be replaced.

As the above suggests, different libraries' experience of market testing and its related processes of privatisation and contracting out impacted on their staff in a variety of ways. Some libraries were unaffected - certain departments declared their libraries *de minimis* - too small in budgetary terms to be worth considering.

Others went part way down the road before the process was called off, usually through lack of other bidders. Yet others found themselves working under different conditions or left or were made redundant as the organisations they worked for themselves suffered privatisation or contracting out - the Atomic Weapons Establishment or the DTI's Warren Spring Laboratory, for example. But very few librarians felt unaffected - as a group we tend to move between departments for career development, so many of those who were not themselves involved would have former colleagues and friends who were. How did government librarians react to the whole process?

The views of government librarians

In 1993 I began work on a major survey of UK government librarians' career development, subsequently published as Broken down by grade and sex.⁸ An eighteen page questionnaire, covering topics such qualifications, career choice, career progression, alternative working patterns and future plans, was distributed widely and some four hundred returns, a response rate of 68%, received. One of the sections dealt with market testing and related topics and asked how respondents' attitudes to their jobs had changed in the light of such developments, whether they foresaw them having an impact on their future careers, and what that impact was likely to be. The questions were repeated, in a slightly modified form, in a much smaller follow-up survey, carried out in 1996-97.

When the 1993 survey was carried out, Next Steps and market testing were major issues for most government librarians. Changing librarian career patterns, the other topic included in the list given in the question, "Do you see your future career progression being affected by any of the following?" had yet to make any real impact. The responses to the 1997 survey reflect how things had changed in the intervening three and half years. Next Steps agencies had become a fact of life, market testing was virtually over, though its offspring, "Competing for Quality" remains in a variety of forms, and changing librarian career patterns in the shape of new pay and grading structures had become a reality for more than 80% of the respondents.

The negative aspects have receded - it may be false hope but Investors in People is more hopeful than market testing. Information is seeing a revival.

Despite this, the proportion of those seeing the changes as positive had dropped very slightly, from nearly 17% in 1993 to just over 14% in 1997, and the

⁸ Burge, Suzanne. "Broken down by grade and sex: the career development of government librarians." London: Library Association Government Libraries Group, 1995

proportion seeing them as negative had gone up from 51% to 57%. (Interestingly, in both surveys men were more likely to be negative than women.) By 1997 the numbers believing that market testing and contracting out would affect their future careers had dropped from nearly 85% to just under 63%, a measure of its reducing impact. This was also reflected in the responses to the final question in the group, "Do you see these developments as having a positive or negative effect on your career?" Some 21% saw them as positive in 1997, compared with 15% in 1993, but while the numbers seeing them as neither positive or negative remained remarkably consistent at 23%, there was a majority, 61% in 1993, 55% in 1997, which saw them as having a negative effect. The following comments give some of the flavour:

From 1993:

I realise now that Civil Service library posts are not "jobs for life" which one might originally have thought. I consequently feel more motivated as the job becomes more competitive.

I'm having to spend large amounts of time providing endless statistics, responding to minutes, etc. rather than doing the JOB. Also a bit more job security would be nice!!

I didn't join to become an accountant.

Having to justify what you do means in some ways looking anew at jobs and then being more confident that what we offer is what is needed.

Market testing has badly affected staff morale.

Fearing that your livelihood may be threatened does not foster a positive attitude.

If the developments were carried out fairly and with a view to improving services the effects might even be positive, but as the main concern is costs, effects are likely to be negative.

>From 1997:

Not so much attitude that's negative - just that one doesn't work optimally if perpetually worried about merger / market test, etc.

These changes, however sensible in themselves, are the result of a purely political dislike of civil servants.

Seem to spend as much time justifying the need for the work as actually doing it.

Although frequently driven by political forces beyond our control, the initiatives may give librarians an opportunity to seize the moment and prove skills we possess but under-utilise at present (e.g. information management) are valuable.

The future

For government libraries as such, though not necessarily for their parent organisations, market testing, contracting out and privatisation now seem to be pretty much a thing of the past. In 1994 the Conservative government issued a

new White Paper, The Civil Service: continuity and change⁹ . It restated the government's commitment to privatisation, but it then went on to say:

“... it will be for departments and agencies themselves to take the lead in combining the right policies into a coherent package in the light of detailed knowledge of their own situation.”

The (comparatively) new Labour government is not hostile to privatisation - it is prepared to consider privatising air traffic control and the Post Office, both of which the Tories balked at, but the document it issued early in July 1998, Better quality services,¹⁰ does make one important change - while market testing, contracting out and privatisation remain options that must be examined by the organisation, they will no longer automatically be favoured over keeping services in-house. It also recognises that “Quality can only be achieved if staff feel fairly treated and are motivated in their work”. Quite how it will work in practice remains to be seen. However, in its emphasis on regular review it fails to recognise that once a service has gone outside, it is almost certainly gone forever, since the costs of recreating it from scratch in-house are likely to be prohibitive, no matter how unsatisfactory the alternative.

Conclusions

One of librarians' most valuable skills has always been networking, and this period demonstrated it to the full. The Committee of Departmental Librarians, on which the chief librarians of all the major departments are represented, set up a group which brought together those at all stages of the process, so experience and documentation could be shared. Working in co-operation with the union, through its branches and the Librarians Group, and with the Library Association at times, considerable information and support could be made available.

Large claims were made for market testing and privatisation in terms of cost and efficiency savings when the proposals were introduced. Global figures were quoted by government at regular intervals, but it has always proved difficult to obtain figures in any detail. In libraries any figures tend to be notable for the things they did not count - the amount of staff time and effort put into preparing bids, staff time spent in resolving problems arising from managing contracts, etc. Much the same applies to efficiency. The majority of government libraries have always engaged - as I am sure do all other sorts of libraries - in constant review of services and procedures, and no doubt many of the changes claimed as a result of

⁹ “The Civil Service: continuity and change.” (Cm 2627). London: HMSO, 1994

¹⁰ “Better quality services: a handbook on creating public/private partnerships through market testing and contracting out.” London: The Stationery Office, 1998

market testing would have taken place anyway, though perhaps with more support from staff and better timing.

In theory the libraries most vulnerable to market testing should have been those least well-integrated into their parent organisations, as it would be just these organisations which would have the least reason to appreciate the particular added value that an in-house service contributed, but this was not necessarily the case. Market testing did however very dramatically illustrate how important it was that the organisation at all levels understands the value of the assets it possesses in its information professionals - an ongoing task for us all.

Posts were lost in some areas as services were cut to ensure bids came in at the right level, after decades of slow but steady growth, but numbers would appear to be creeping back up again as information professionals in a number of departments move into areas such work on information management.

In many cases the greatest impact was on morale. For senior library staff in some cases morale improved, because they were fighting a battle they felt they could win - though for others the weight of responsibility for their staff and service fell heavy. But for more junior staff there was great stress with all too often few or no compensations. Workloads increased, future careers seemed threatened, and because of the nature of the process there were long periods when either confidentiality meant no information could be passed to them, or the longeurs of the process meant that nothing was happening so there was nothing they could be told. At such times rumours flourished, damaging morale still further. The view of certain members of the government, despite its routine protestations otherwise, that civil servants were parasites on the body politic, did not help.

The title of this paper - "Much pain, little gain" is perhaps the most concise summary I can offer.

Suzanne Burge
Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for
Administration / Health Service Commissioner
Library and Information Service
15th Floor, Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP
Great Britain
e-mail: S.Burge@btinternet.com

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY*

By Jacek Michalowski and Ewa Nawrocka

Abstract: Parliamentary research institutions face growing demands for their services on one hand, and must keep up with an avalanche of advances in the field of information science on the other. In Great Britain, for example, it is expected that the use of modern technology will greatly increase in the new parliament, both for the research service and on the part of new Members and their staff. "The driving forces in the increase both in the qualitative expectations of Members for specialized briefing and in the volume of demand have been the pressures on Members themselves- greater exposure to the media, greater expectations from constituents, probably fueled partly by the televising of the House and resulting in larger postbags, and possibly more diffuse changes in the political and social climate associated with the emphasis on citizens rights and the expansion of information of all kinds" - says Simon Young (Head of research services for the British House of Commons Library).

At the same time, research services are confronted with the pressure for budgetary reductions and cost-effectiveness analyses, which usually means less money for specialized outside contracts. In turn, this places a heavier workload and much greater responsibility on the in-house specialists. Several services are in the process of reviewing their strategies, programs, and policies in response to these cross-cutting forces. Many parliamentary research services are in a profound transition process.

I. Background

This comparative analysis of 11 countries offers some insights into how parliamentary research services are coping with this challenge. The paper was inspired by Bill Robinson's request for more comparative information. In addition to his wonderful support and his contribution, many colleagues from all over the world contributed to the work of preparing this report. In total, 11 persons responded to the short survey that provides the basis for this report. Hereby we gratefully acknowledge contributions from:

- William H. Robinson, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, USA
- Ivi Eenmaa, Reference and Information Analysis Center, National Library of Estonia

* Paper presented at the 63th IFLA General Conference in Copenhagen 1997

- Hugh Finsten, Research Branch, Library of Parliament, Canada
- Dulce Maria Liahut, Integrated Information and Documentation System (SIID) of the Parliament, Mexico
- Erica Lieser, Research Services of the German Bundestag
- Takane Moriyama, Research and Legislative Reference Bureau, National Diet Library, Japan
- Wieslaw Staskiewicz, Research and Expertise Bureau of the Sejm of Poland
- Jindriska Syllova, Parliamentary Institute, Czech Republic
- Danute Vabalaite, Information Analysis Department, Seimas of Lithuania
- June Verrier, Research Services, Parliament of Australia
- Simon Young, Research Services of the House of Commons Library.

In our report we focus our attention on: new products and services or new emphases on old products and services; new analytical techniques; and the use of new technology like automation and telecommunications to better serve the parliament.

II. New Research Products, Services, or Analytical Techniques

A. Organizational or Process Changes

First, in terms of a general overview, we observe some interesting organizational or institutional changes. Usually they result in the combination of client services programs to provide a more streamlined, "one- stop shopping" service, as in the case of the Australian Parliament. In Australia, two former client services programs- library and research - were combined earlier this year into a single administrative structure. In December 1996 the Research Directorate of the German Bundestag opened a telephone Hotline to better serve the MPs.

The search for easy access and more integrated service to clients is also seen in other parliaments. The U.S. Congressional Research Service uses teams of analysts to produce more cross-division cooperation, resulting in work that is more interdisciplinary and integrative in nature. In the Senate Research Office in Poland, we also integrate our work by encouraging and forming teams and task forces- asking people from different divisions to cooperate in responding to more complex requests. Quick Reference Unit staff work closely with the specialists from the Subject Report and European Documentation and Analysis Units. Sometimes, we also involve committee services in work on specialized reports. This is especially important in the case of seminars and conferences.

In Canada, in order to make publications more relevant, an internal committee of professional staff, chaired by a manager, was formed to review the publication

program and make recommendations. Among the specific topics it is reviewing are: choosing topics; the role of advocacy, if any; formats; electronic publishing; resources; review process; contracting out; publicizing papers; interdisciplinary work; and coverage of bills.

Similarly in the Research and Expertise Office of the Polish Sejm all requests for scholarly consultancies are coordinated and financially supervised directly by its Director, with the help of a specialized team.

This cross division cooperation is enhanced by modern integrated information systems, which are used in many parliamentary research services. We will deal with this issues in greater detail later, but we can mention here the Integrated Information and Documentation System of the Camara de Diputados, Mexico; or the integrated information system called INNOPAC , started in 7 major research libraries of Estonia; or the new Legislative Information System (LIS) in the USA.

B. New Publications

Several parliaments have important new publications. In the spring of 1996, the Research Services of the Polish Senate added two new publications to its regular series of expert opinions and legislative history of bills expecting to be processed in the Senate. One of the new publications, *Legislative Notebook*, is a monthly review of legislative initiatives and legislative status of bills both in Poland and worldwide, filling the vacuum in this respect. The other new publication , *Reviews of the Polish and Foreign Press* is indexed by subject and consists of printouts from a new data base. The Research Bureau of the other chamber in Poland, the Sejm, distributes issue briefs to Deputies consisting of inside expert opinions on new drafts whose first readings are on the agenda. Similarly in the USA, CRS adopted a *Legislative Alert* system to link its services and products more closely to the legislative agenda of Congress. The Alert is a brief 1-2 page checklist which is faxed to each Congressional office on Sunday (so it is available every Monday morning), identifying CRS products that are addressed to topics on which congress will be voting that week. CRS reports or products cited in the checklist can be ordered in hard copy by telephone or e-mail, viewed electronically, or delivered by a fax-on-demand system for short reports. (By calling a telephone number and inputting your own fax number and the number of the desired report, the report is then automatically faxed to the Member's office).

The Polish Sejm Library, in cooperation with the Research Bureau's experts, publishes a bi-monthly bulletin *Closer to NATO*, first issued in January 1997. The SIID of the Camara de Diputados in Mexico publishes a monographic series *Aid Notebook* with four general themes: legislative process and legal materials, public

opinion, bibliographic items, and general topics. The most recent product is one on public opinion, systematizing by subject all the news appearing about legislative or political items. Also the Internal Information Group of the Seimas of Lithuania collects information and regularly presents to the MPs opinions of the general public on drafts and laws. Beginning in 1996, standing committees in Estonia receive annotated lists of new literature on law, politics, and the economy.

C. Faster, More Personalized Services for Members

The answer to the pressures put on parliamentary services by our clients and by the necessity of proving cost effectiveness is higher quality products and greater efficiency in our operations. It also means providing faster, more personalized services to Members of Parliament and Committees. For the House of Commons, requests for private briefings by researchers for individual members makes up a growing share of their service. It is also the case with the Polish Senate services. For Australian researchers, upgrading services means to focus more heavily on providing briefings to Senators and Members in increasingly friendly ways: brevity is of the essence and so is the presentation in other than prose form (tables, graphs, diagrams and occasional seminars). In 1996, both Australia and the Polish Senate conducted client services surveys. These independent surveys both suggested the need to treat the members less as a homogeneous group, and more as so many separate businesses- with different strategies to develop improved client profiles and to work more individually to ensure they are applying their resources as precisely as possible to their client's specific needs. The results of these surveys confirm similar findings of the U.S. Congressional Research Service a few years ago. The conclusion suggests a switch from a reactive set of standardized services to a proactive approach to the delivery of more highly individualized services.

There is increasing time pressure placed on responses to requests, so besides written replies, consultation over the telephone or e-mail can play an important part. Within various types of the service, specialists are able to supply increased detail and sophistication through drawing on the resources made available through technology, and also to give very rapid responses. CRS places greater emphasis on short reports (limit 6 pages, with more charts and graphs) with the intent to increase accessibility and readability by Members of the Congress. In the Canadian Research Branch, their publication program is a key element of their overall service to Parliament (with 500 titles on the current list, another 500 on the archival one, and 15-20,000 copies sent to clients each year on request!). Work for members over the past few years has tended to be oriented towards succinct responses to narrowly defined questions, rather than more extensive, in-

depth, academic style coverage of a topic. Moreover, many questions are of an urgent nature, requiring immediate information by telephone or a quick note with only a few hours preparation time.

Answering the need for more personalized services also means providing orientation programs for newly elected members. Many parliaments experience great turnover. Recent examples include Canada, Poland, Great Britain, and the USA. In the USA, CRS conducted the official new member orientation program and in the Polish Senate the Research office is working hard to prepare several publications and programs for the senators who will be elected this fall and for their staff. In the upcoming elections in Poland, we expect turnover that could reach as high as 60-70%.

It is worth mentioning that in Canada pre-election programs are organized with sessions focusing on highly relevant topics, including *How to Get Media Attention for Your Member*, *Electoral Laws and Election Financing* and *House of Commons Administrative Issues* dealing with administrative rules during the election period such as the use of parliamentary services.

D. New Directions for Analysis

There are two current programmatic themes common to research services of parliaments: one is present all over the world - the increased importance of the budget and budget analysis by the Parliament, and the second is crucial for newly democratic countries of Central and Eastern Europe - *the compatibility of proposed legislation with the EU standards*.

In order to match research work with the changing nature of legislative activity in the U.S. Congress, CRS focuses more on budget and appropriations decisions - since it was discovered that 70% of congressional workload in the U.S. is related to the budget. A special link in the CRS homepage was created to be used as a finding tool for budget and appropriation products, such as issue briefs, reports, Congressional Budget Office Reports, appropriation bills, and other useful financial information. Making its own internal resource allocation process more responsive to its environment, the CRS budget for staff and other needs is allocated according to the level of legislative activity being addressed by the particular CRS unit. In the Senate of Poland a large part of the budget for contracts with outside expert consultants is used on budgetary matters. The Sejm decided to build such expertise into its own internal structure and created two units within its Budget Analyses Division: the Financial Analyses Group and the Budget Law Group.

According to the results of our survey, the research services in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, and both Polish chambers focus on analyzing EU legislation. There are special units created for managing requests concerning all aspects of incorporation of the associated countries into European structures, like the one currently in the initiation stage in the Sejm of Poland and not so new in the Senate. To prepare compatibility studies, that is to compare the draft law with the E.C. legislation and to give expert opinion on such matters, is also the new responsibility for the Czech Parliamentary Institute. In Estonia, an EU information center will soon be established in the National Library in close cooperation with the Parliament. For all of these countries the issue of external compatibility presents completely new tasks and problems.

E. New Research and Analysis Techniques

Modern technology is also applied to new analytical techniques. Quite recently, the Polish Sejm has been equipped with a special computer program which can handle hundreds of amendments introduced to the draft of the state budget during parliamentary consideration. The Canadian Parliament takes advantage of new techniques such as microsimulation to enable its economists to create a mathematical model of the tax system and to ask what the effect on the budget deficit will be of changing corporate taxes. Microsimulation is the adaptation of large-scale modeling which requires the use of high-end desktop PCs or even of large mainframe computers. The US Congressional Research Service reports more use of computer models and quantitative research methods. For example, CRS makes use of the following types of models for analyzing policy and its possible effects: health insurance models, a pension integration model, grant allocation model, and small desktop algorithms for estimating the effects of changes in the Unemployment Compensation system or the calculation of benefits under the Social Security pension system. These models help answer quickly the many hypothetical "what-if" questions of policymakers, and also permit estimates of possible impacts even before the changes are made- to enable Members to decide whether or not they judge such outcomes to be desirable.

III. The Use of New Technology

A. Technical Equipment and Staff Requirements

The answer to the need for intensifying and upgrading services, while at the same time looking for cost effective methods or even reducing the cost of the parliamentary research services, lies in modern technology and highly qualified, well educated, continuously trained and motivated staff. Of course two crucial technological requirements are powerful desk-top computers (in CRS they have

nearly all PCs at Pentium level technology) and the network. With powerful PCs, we can go for highly processed products, using all kinds of modern text and data processors and editors, which enables the staff to provide more sophisticated responses to client requests in terms of the use, presentation and analysis of data. We also can use complex data bases and CD-ROMs, as well as being able to create our own very specific data bases. With networking our clients get immediate access to our products, and we communicate and cooperate with our colleagues in a very easy and efficient way.

B. The Internet

Through INTERNET we share incredible amounts of information at a very low cost- and getting to it all very quickly. We economize on time, paper resources, and specialized research. The Senate of Poland Quick Reference Unit has just started using INTERNET on a daily basis using it mostly for parliamentary information and newspaper articles searching. The European Documentation and Analysis Division is already quite experienced in using INTERNET for any kind of information on international affairs: it is often the only possible source, especially in the case of recent treaties, international agreements and conference reports. We access the servers of the European Parliament, Council of Europe, NATO, press agencies, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We have access to the collections of the Library of Congress and the US Code, and to university and research libraries in Poland and all over the world.

"On-line access to the INTERNET and the information sources it provides has resulted in one of the most significant changes in the way the staff undertakes their research and has resulted in considerable efficiencies as staff access material and download it directly on their office computers" - says Hugh Finsten in his report on the Canadian Parliament.

INTERNET has created an issue for the Australian Parliament. They decided to put up all their papers in full text on the Internet from the beginning of the 38th Commonwealth Parliament (from March 1996) to the present. As June Verrier says, while this has done wonders for their profile, it is frustrating for their clients who do not have desktop access to the INTERNET in Parliament House as all the officers in the department do.

The Lithuanians also increasingly use the INTERNET and they would like to find more full texts of laws of different countries. The Czechs use the INTERNET more frequently, especially for information about developments in foreign countries.

Many parliaments have their own WWW page, putting up important information and in some cases even delivering information to deputies in this way, as is the case with Mexico. In the Senate we plan to have Legislative Notebook in an English version in WWW, possibly next year. The Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments has an excellent homepage on the Internet, maintained by the Coordinator of Information for the Section, Nick Bannenberg. The address for the homepage is <http://www.citec.com.au/iflaparl/index.html>. The Section has copies of all the papers for the Open Meetings posted even before the Conference.

C. Databases and CD-ROMs

Besides INTERNET, CD-ROMs and on-line commercial data bases are increasing in use. Hundreds of databases are used- 500 databases in the German Bundestag, 200 CD-ROMs in the Mexican Parliament- to name just two cases. To some of us, having access to very few commercial data bases or CDs, these numbers seem incredible.

Very important for parliaments are their own data bases. All over the world there are enormous projects going on. Takane Moriyama reports from Japan that the Research Bureau constructed a database system for the General Index to the Debates of the Diet since 1971, which the members can use through the National Diet Library Online Retrieval system. They also constructed an Optical Disc Filing System for the Minutes of the Diet and are in the process of developing a full text database. Modern technology has enabled the Bureau to work professionally and efficiently with an increasingly young staff, which is the personnel policy of the Parliament.

Parliamentary data bases vary from very sophisticated systems like the British POLIS, or those in Australia or America, to less complex, home-made data bases, like two recent data bases in the Senate of Poland: one indexing the debates by subject, the other indexing Polish and foreign press articles- using a specially adapted version of the EUROVOC thesaurus.

D. Networks and Sharing Access to Products

The importance of networking is emphasized in all the country reports. Numerous data bases are available in electronic form through parliamentary database systems from the house and electorate offices. The ideal situation will be achieved when there is immediate access to all the research products, full text of the debates, texts of bills, bill status, committee reports, schedules of congressional floor and committees activities, summaries of current floor debate and action, and possibly the text of amendments within minutes of being offered. Several such

systems are in various stages of development. Some research services have their own homepages with easy to use hypertext-links. It is worth mentioning that the CRS was asked by Congress to suggest ways to coordinate these information activities in a new, integrated *Legislative Information System (LIS)* to assure "widest possible exchange of information among legislative branch agencies with the long range goal of improving technology planning and evaluation" and to avoid duplication. Providing access is solving part of the problem, the other side is providing the clients with all the back-up and training so that they attain a "self-help" status as soon as possible- as well as to deal with cautious attitudes about technology. Some clients will always ask for hard copy- apparently caring more for convenience and maintenance of old habits than for trees. There is an inherent tension between the desire to offer free access to databases (even to the public), and the need of the Parliament to maintain confidentiality for some of the information. Often, parliaments restrict access to some material to Members of Parliament and research branch staff and selected staff in the library.

E. E-Mail

Finally, e-mail communication adds a personal touch to all of these great technological achievements. By using e-mail we can have direct and immediate contact with members, and parliamentary staff and colleagues all over the world. We can exchange information or ask a question at any time of day or night, sharing resources for the best use of our clients, "something increasingly important in a resource pressured environment" (June Verrier).

Jacek Michalowski and Ewa Nawrocka
Research and Analysis Office
Senate of Poland
Warsaw
Poland

MUSEUM LIBRARIES: FROM HIDDEN TREASURES TO TREASURED INFORMATION CENTRES*

By Michiel Nijhoff

Abstract: In this paper the author describes the situation of the Dutch libraries specialized in the history of art. At various levels an enormous number of art-historical publications are present. Collective efforts to improve availability are mentioned: the PICA/NCC system linked with the universities and the Royal Library, and the production of a CD-ROM of the museum libraries and other libraries not taking part in PICA. The PICA-libraries own between 450,000 – 600,000 books on art, the non-PICA libraries 1,800,000. When these collections are opened up on Internet and through CD-ROM, an increase in the number of students at the museum libraries is expected. These will have to create facilities for the increasing number of clients, which will have consequences for their organization.

Introduction

The theme of these workshops 'libraries at crossroads' suggests that libraries are at a point where they can change direction dramatically. In my opinion this is not the case at all. I believe that the radical changes we see in digitalisation of information is only a change of form, and that the direction in which we develop has a far greater continuity than we sometimes realize. To go one step further, I believe that one of the functions of a library, at least of a library in the humanities, is to keep the historical perspective in view. A Dutch cartoonist illustrated the tendency to see modern technology as ends rather than means with a drawing showing some elderly gentlemen sitting in a train called Internet. Another man jumps aboard. The caption reads 'We haven't the slightest idea where it is going, but we don't want to miss it'.

Some time before the computer era really got started the first Dutch professor of librarianship Loosjes defined documentary information as 'knowledge in motion', meaning the continuing process of reading and researching, theorising and publishing, cataloguing and making available, reading and researching etc. Despite the fact that a lot of documentary information has lost its documentary aspect, and has become more volatile, and despite the fact that the motion has increased in pace, the underlying thought is valid still. And has been valid for a

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long time: lots of things we consider new were thought of long before the tools to realize them were there. In „Le diverse et artificiose machine del capitano Agostino Ramelli,“ published in Paris in the sixteenth century, we see a renaissance version of Windows, Windows 1558 to be precise. The reader, sitting at the revolving bookmachine, can get simultaneous access to twelve books, not by using a mouse, but, much more efficient, by using footpedals.

The role of the librarian, by whichever name we care to name him, will always be, has to be, that of a pilot steering people towards that bit or byte of information they seek.

Nevertheless, big changes are taking place of course, and in the following speech I will try to give you an impression of the changing field of art historical librarianship in the Netherlands.

Art historical libraries in the Netherlands: some collective projects

For students and researchers there are a number of possible sources for literature. The universities of course have their large university libraries and smaller institutional libraries. Then there is the Royal Library in The Hague, with, in the same building, the Stichting Rijksbureau Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD), the largest art historical research library in the Netherlands with a collection of 400.000 volumes, including 130.000 auction catalogues. The third group consists of the museum libraries. Each of the larger art museums has its own library, ranging from the library of the Van Gogh Museum with a collection of 40.000 volumes to the library of the Rijksmuseum, with 210.000 volumes. Most of the museum libraries are open to the public, though only the library of the Stedelijk Museum was conceived as a public library.

In the beginning of the seventies the university libraries and the Royal Library felt the need to cut down costs of cataloguing and developed a computer system in which shared cataloguing played a central role. PICA is the face of library automation in the Netherlands as far as the universities and the Royal Library are concerned. PICA (Centre for Library Automatization) and the Royal Library are responsible for the NCC, the Dutch Union Catalogue, and the NCC/P, the Dutch Union Catalogue of Periodicals.

Nevertheless there is a large number of libraries, that do not take part in PICA and the NCC. The reason is that for smaller and specialized libraries PICA is often very expensive, and, being a very large system and a big organization, flexibility is not the first word I have in mind when I think of describing its attitude towards everything non-PICA.

The number of volumes of art historical publications of libraries that do partake in PICA is not easily distilled since part of this literature is embedded in larger collections, but an optimistic guess would be between 450,000 and 600,000. The non-PICA-libraries own 1,845,000 volumes between them. In both cases I'm talking volumes, not titles.

The libraries of the RKD, The Rijksmuseum, The Stedelijk Museum and the Museum Boijmans, together good for a million books, all cataloguing with the same, non-PICA system, i.e. TINLIB, wanted to produce a joint database, offering the whole to the NCC, and thus filling a blank space. All four librarians of these institutions had expected that the biggest part of these collections would prove to overlap. To our great surprise 60% of the titles proved to be unique, available at just one of these four libraries. Thus making a joint catalogue more difficult and more interesting at the same time. The idea of an on-line database with possibilities for shared cataloguing proved too expensive, but a CD-ROM listing these four collections is in production. It is the intention that the smaller TINLIB libraries will in the future be included in this project, so that a better overview of the whole of the art historical literature present in the Netherlands will be available within a few years.

All art libraries now participate in the OKBN, an acronym standing for Overleg Kunsthistorische Bibliotheken Nederland, the Art Libraries Society. In 1982 eight librarians of art historical libraries began holding informal meetings to exchange ideas and opinions and profit from each others' experience. The style of these meetings is still informal, but for practical reasons, the debating club became a registered association in 1996. Nowadays the meetings are generally attended by some thirty to forty librarians. In 1996 the OKBN produced a valuable guide to art historical and related library collections in the Netherlands, called 'Collections of art-historical documentation in the Netherlands'.

Recent initiatives to create local library networks give access to various collections. Amsterdamnet and Rotterdamnet for instance, create the possibility to search through all Amsterdam or Rotterdam library collections: public, university and special libraries in one system.

Changing role of museum libraries

The museum libraries are confronted with a growing number of users. This has different reasons. Due to the decrease or lack of increase in acquisition budgets, the libraries of the universities have had to cut down the number of acquisitions in the last decades.

A second reason for a growing number of potential clients is the increase in postgraduate research. In the Netherlands there has grown a rather wide cleft between those art historians who work in a museum and those who work at the universities. The latter group has the tendency to do theoretical research, the former is busy with the more practical aspects of the trade. This situation is not, as for instance in France, caused by different educational training, but the result of an extreme low job mobility, so that there are not many people who make the transfer from university to museum and vice versa. This situation was seen to be far from ideal, both by the museums and the universities. This was one of the reasons for establishing the Onderzoekschool Kunstgeschiedenis (Dutch postgraduate School for Art History) in 1994, in which universities and museums collaborate, giving postgraduate students the chance to do research in the museums too.

The library of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

In 1849 the Museum Boijmans in Rotterdam was founded. Though books were collected from the beginning, a library did not exist. Some of the early directors of the museum brought their own libraries with them when they were appointed, and, alas took them with them when they left. A form of international exchange of publications was already in evidence at the end of the nineteenth century. From 1924 the curator of the print room was also officially responsible for the library, but only in 1962 a professional librarian was appointed. Nowadays the official formation consists of two librarians. For a library with a total of more than 120,000 books and a yearly increase of between 2500 and 3500 titles this is not a comfortable situation, and the motto has always been: work fast and cut corners. Still, not all is gloom.

The collection of the library is varied and contains more than 70,000 exhibition catalogues, 30,000 monographs and 20,000 collection catalogues. There is a small but interesting collection of emblem books and old imprints, but the most special collection is the one on surrealism. Since the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is the only museum in the Netherlands with a collection of surrealism the library has for twenty years now collected in this area. This includes not only exhibition catalogues and monographs, but also the source materials. The emphasis lies on the books and periodicals published between 1920 and 1950. La révolution surréaliste, Minotaure, Documents, Variétés, London bulletin are just five magazines of the more than hundred that appeared in the interbellum. Of these periodicals almost none is present in Dutch library collections. Checking the NCC Periodicals one finds few of the originals, some reprints, and then mostly scattered over different libraries all over the country. Museum Boijmans can proudly state

that it has a central research collection in this field. Of course much larger collections exist abroad, for instance in Brussels and Paris, and in Chicago. At the moment we are trying to find a special budget for this category of books which can still be found at not too unreasonable prices.

The book collection is not only used in a documentary fashion. Boijmans is a varied museum, with modern and old art and decorative art. The museum tries to make integrated exhibitions: when for instance the Moroccan photographs of the American writer Paul Bowles were shown, the library put together an exhibition of books of artists' travels in Morocco, of old guidebooks and maps, all from the own collection.

This fabulous library deserves much more attention and visitors than it gets at the moment. And our ambition is to make this unknown, hidden treasure known, to change this inwards orientated library to a library that is not so much a public library as a library open to all people who are interested in art and art history. The four pillars on which this programme is founded are: the collection, the building, automation, and staff. Five years ago we had just the collection. No adequate staff, no computer, a reading room with a few rickety chairs, some dusty cellars bursting with books, the collection divided over six locations within the museum.

One by one the problems are being solved. We have managed to obtain a grant of 250,000 guilders to catalogue the whole collection retrospectively. This project is now being undertaken by a firm specialized in this field. The collection is still being expanded in the same way as before, and here we are searching for extra means to extend the special collection on surrealism. The housing problem will be over when the new extension of the museum will open its doors, and the staffing problem? Well, when two out of three major problems prove solvable within five years, this last obstruction to a real new library functioning in a new way will surely be overcome.

Summary

The challenge to the museum libraries is to change from inward-looking institutions to a more open kind of library. This change will have to take place without losing their specialist knowledge and without changing the successful way of collecting: the relatively low overlap of titles between the three large museums and the RKD prove the advantage of the link between museum collection and library collection. Their original function within the museum will not change drastically, and the non-lending policy will remain. Therefore they will have to improve facilities for accommodating the rising number of researchers and students that will undoubtedly be the result of the better access to their collections.

The museum libraries will not change directions at crossroads, but go right on, widening their path from mule track to digital highway, a process that will take time and has to be supervised carefully.

Michiel Nijhoff
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen
P.O. Box 2277
NL -3000 CG Rotterdam
Fax: ++31 10 4360500
nyhoff@boijmans.rotterdam.nl

CENSORSHIP IN THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS CULTURAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESULTS FOR ARTS AND ART LIBRARIES.*

By Olga Sinitsyna

Abstract: Although official censorship ceased 10 years ago, the effects of censorship in the Soviet Union in art and art libraries are still felt. The focus of this paper is on censored library materials, and on the censorship of art. The censored books were marked with a hexagon, and relegated to the „spets-hran“ or special stacks which for many years were off limits to the public and library staff alike. The author takes a look at materials from the All Russia State Library for Foreign Literature that had been censored, and examines the rules of the censors to determine why certain items were censored. In art, only certain themes were sanctioned. Because art can be abstract and difficult to interpret figuratively, it was determined that the only allowable style of art was that of social realism.

In 1998 we are celebrating a significant date. 10 years ago the official censorship in the Soviet Union was ceased. I wonder if many of our citizens noticed this undoubtedly historical moment immediately, but for the libraries a new era began in its full sense with all necessary challenges, questions and hopes. In the library I'm working in it was a physical action of opening the doors of the department, which in former days used to be «for official use only». All the banned publications, that had been kept there for decades, became at once accessible for the general public. I must say that the publications kept in such departments, known as «spets-hran» or special stacks, beforehand were not accessible for the librarians either. The staff of those departments had to be well tested and controlled in the political and ideological loyalty. No «strangers» could ever enter those «solemn islands».

You may ask why again to talk about those years, which fortunately belong to the history. Firstly, because now we can talk about the fruits of that ever-present censorship, which some of us just did not notice because it seemed to be a natural part of our life. And secondly we should keep on comparing what we used to have and what we have got now in terms of freedom of expression.

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We used to feel «an eye» everywhere, therefore everyone had to develop an inner-censor for self-controlling of whatever was to be written, said or expressed in any media. So we can talk about two kinds of censorship, both well developed in the Soviet Union:

- *a preliminary personal censorship or self-controlling of an author;*
- *an official censorship, provided by special governmental bodies, like the State Committee for Protection of the State Secrets in Publications, all kinds of state and local Art Councils, Committees on Arts and Culture, editorial boards, etc.*

Libraries were considered to be the best places for state regulation and control of the access to the publications. I assume that it's not exclusively a Soviet approach, but I'm sure that in case of the Library for Foreign Literature it was a particular instance. Working with the foreign publications the censors had to be very knowledgeable and to possess some special abilities. They ought «*to protect the minds of the Soviet people from the harmful influence and infection of the West*». As far as the art process and publishing in the world couldn't have been put under control of the Soviet censors. However, at the same time they were bound to provide the public with some distilled information on the progressive artistic movements abroad, their task was to limit the access to the foreign publications by housing them in the major state libraries only. Foreign materials were not permitted either in small local libraries or even in private book collections. Therefore private persons were not allowed to bring any publications from abroad or to receive them by post. Each attempt of that kind was suppressed by the customs. The publications were confiscated even being the private postage except the diplomatic mailing.

Having passed the official censorship at the above-mentioned State Committee the foreign materials were forwarded to the main state libraries, minding their specialization. So twice a year our Library received the «gifts of Glavpochta» (Glavpochta or Glavlit were abbreviation of that Committee). Normally each of those «gifts» contained about 200 books. Each one bore a special mark on the title page with a personal number of the censor. Triangle meant that the publication could be stored in the main stacks and be accessible to the general public. Hexagon meant that the publication should be kept in the special stacks and the access to it should be strictly limited. It could be even two or three hexagon marks on the title page indicating that it might have been an enormously harmful publication. Very few libraries in the whole country (KGB, Central Committee of the CPSU, and may be 1 or 2 more) could have such publications even if they had «special stacks». I must notice that the route the foreign publications had to pass

before they were received by the Libraries was exactly the same regardless either it had been a subscription, order, exchange or occasional «donations».

There were some curious instances when two copies of the same publication could be directed to different stacks, one can only wonder why. In a way it was a complicated task to judge and make a decision. Every time it was a personal decision of a particular censor and his personal responsibility except the cases of «generally banned» periodicals (like «Time», «Life», «Paris Match», «New York Times», «Times», «Cosmopolitan», «Panorama», etc) or names (Solzhenitsin, Trotsky, Kissinger et al.). Some particular issues of generally «opened» periodicals could for some reasons also be directed to the special stacks. It sometimes happened to the art periodicals, like «Art in America», «Art Forum» and other quite harmless titles.

When I finally got access to those stacks, you can imagine my curiosity and enthusiasm while selecting the books for the open access in the Arts reading room. But I kept on asking the same question «why?». In many instances I managed to find the answer, but sometimes I was left embarrassed or confused. I could understand it in case of the monographs on Kandinsky, Chagall, Malevich, Melnikov, Dali, Magritte, Egon Schiele; on Surrealism, Dada, Expressionism and other «harmful» trends in modern art. It was clear why it was forbidden to the general Soviet public to read Dali's diaries for instance: people could have learnt some secrets of his physiology. But what was wrong about Giotto, Matisse, Picasso, Bauhaus architecture, Le Corbusier or Beatles' lyrics? The most astonishing instance was «Encyclopedia of Gnomes» - a lovely children's book with funny pictures and text.

Having done a thorough analysis of the probable reasons which defined the censors' decisions to put a hexagon on the title page of an art publication I may classify them as following:

- political reasons (criticism of the Soviet Union, CPSU, Soviet regime, particular political bodies and figures);
- political unreliability (temporary or permanent) of an artist, whose work was the subject of the publication;
- political unreliability (temporary or permanent) of an author of a publication;
- mentioning an unreliable person, unworthy fact or event in the text unless it was criticized (possible cuttings of the text or plates);
- generally prohibited subject (for instance: unofficial Soviet art);
- propaganda of fascism, violence or terror (horror films belonged to that category);

- pornography (a magic word - none of the censors could ever give a distinct definition of this term in their special vocabulary; the most frequent reason for art publications to become banned as most of the artists, since the ancient times, had made the studies of the nude models);
- themes, subjects, facts, events which caused or might have caused undesirable thoughts, associations or illusions not in favour of the Soviet state.

It might seem to be quite a simple task to separate a harmful publication from a «good» one taking in account only ideological reasons. A censor had to be aware of the political platform of an author and his loyalty towards the Soviet Union and Communist Party. In case of political or economical publications it was true. In case of fiction, poetry, or art it appeared to be much more difficult for censors to judge.

The access to the original works of foreign art had been controlled by the state in different ways:

- general limitation of the traveling abroad and instant control of the behaviour of the Soviet citizens while in the foreign countries;
- strict limitation and censorship of the type of art objects to be displayed in the museums both at the permanent and temporary exhibitions;
- limitation of the import of the art objects by private persons;
- prohibition of the private art galleries and thus strict state control of each public presentation of the private art collections.

Within the country it became vital for the sake of «the mental health» of the Soviet people to intrude in the very process of creation of an art object regardless to its media. This task was articulated shortly after the Revolution on the earliest days of the Soviet state, but it was not an easy one. Perception of the art works is more a sensation than a rational understanding. For example, the Russian avant-garde art of that period was predominantly non-figurative and the subjects could hardly be guessed or were too abstract. In this regard the decision of the Soviet cultural authorities was as simple as brilliant: *To avoid any kind of double or hidden meaning, equivoques, misunderstanding of the contents of the art works the socialist realism was declared the one and only acceptable style and method of all arts in the Soviet Union.*

After the Revolution the foremost Russian artists were forced to emigrate. It was a great tragedy of the national art. Those who for various reasons refused to leave the country had either to accept the communist dictatorship in art or to give up working. It took about 10 years (1922-1932) for the final break down and to put an end to «the art of the bourgeois past». Every *-ism* of the early 20th century art

became the synonyms of the rudest words, generalised in the worst two terms: «*formalism*» and «*modernism*». Thus a great man-made gap had been generated in the evolution of Russian art. Every single attempt to change the direction of the main trend was suppressed and the guilty artist badly prosecuted.

Architecture, being the most social and the least personal art, was put under the total state control. The only accepted official architectural image was that of the *imperial greatness of the Soviet state*, which could have been produced only by the *classical forms* and language of masses and space borrowed from the Roman architecture. Few exceptions, presented by Melnikov for instance, were merely experiments. *Demolition of the historical buildings* was another form of censorship in the architectural environment. Even some architectural forms were considered to be associated with the «hatred past» and therefore banned. That was the *church dome* - symbol of the heaven. Thousands of churches had been demolished in the country during that battle with the symbols of the past. The same was the fate of numerous manor estates, palaces, and private houses. Some of them, however, were successfully used by the new Soviet «aristocracy» or converted into the residential blocks, museums, warehouses, garages, etc.

In fact the Soviet sculpture had suffered the similar fatal violence. Immediately after the Revolution it had been worked out a special *Plan of Monumental Propaganda*, under which all the statues to the tsars had to be demolished or taken away, with the few exceptions. They were to be replaced by the new monuments to the progressive leaders of all times according to the special approved list. Strangely, some really good monuments were erected in the first years of that «pilot-project», like the one to Timiryazev by Merkurov in Moscow. In general the Soviet sculpture was aimed to glorify the formal party leaders in the basic forms of the socialist realism. Only the II World War monuments bare the true emotions of their authors and express the total grief and glory of the nation.

The recognition of the power of art in promotion of the state ideas to the masses was well demonstrated by the emerging of «agit-farfor» (propaganda pottery) - a unique type of Soviet pottery design. The painters on their part were highly recommended to learn from the works of Repine and to follow the tradition of Russian critical realists of the 19th century. The language of Soviet painting should be strictly realistic and the themes chosen should depict and praise the delights of the life in the Soviet Union.

As the result of such a violent «weeding» during a substantial period of time a certain generation of the obedient artists had been brought up. They knew the rules of the play they were all playing. The censors had done a good job offering the public well-selected information concerning the national cultural and

historical heritage. There appeared some blank periods in the pre-Revolutionary history, some cultural epochs were totally neglected, some important names crossed out for decades (at that time it seemed forever). The Soviet art criticism suffered the same pressure of censorship. The only accepted approach for an art critic was that from the ideological position «of the class struggle», which was regarded more important than consideration of the aesthetic values. From that point of view the world art had been divided into two parts: *progressive* and *regressive* (often called *reactionary*).

The quoting of classics of Marxism-Leninism in any work on any subject was required. Selection of appropriate citations became a sort of a new art. Those were the requirements for every publication and public speech. The Bibliographies were to start with the works of «classics», even though none of them had ever written anything on the subject. The best scholars, like Lazarev, Grabar, Bakushinski, Vipper, Zavadskaya, Kaptereva, Nekrasova somehow managed to publish their works in the history of art paying only a little fee to that set of rules. The less prominent scholars had to pay a bigger tribute. Those, who refused to accept the rules were prosecuted and «taught» in the Stalin camps

The criteria for division of art of the past into two categories was quite simple: the work of art should bare or not some peculiar signs of progressiveness, such as themes of labour, struggle for justice, protest against the bourgeois society, pity for suffering, depiction of poor people, social and class struggle. For obvious reasons the mediaeval art, being the art which served the religion, was not worth studying. Some excellent surveys on Byzantine and Ancient Russian art were published, because the art works had been taken only as the cultural, not religious objects and certainly because of the highest prominence of the authors (Grabar, Lazarev, Alpatov). Strangely, the art-nouveau was badly criticized in spite of the obvious socialist ideas of the improvement of the society by means of art. The attitude towards this style has gradually changed only in the late 70s. The same was true about the historicism (eclectic style) of the mid-second half of the 19th century.

In fact it had been only one book called «Modernism: Analysis and criticism of the major trends in art of the 20-th century» (the last edition of which was published in the late 1980-es) in which one could get an information on the art movements and key-figures of the 20-th century and even to look at the poor black and white plates. Along with the rude criticism of the bourgeois art, presented by the obedient authors some good art critics managed to present just a brief review of facts, names and events avoiding any judgment at all. But even that limited information had been invaluable to the researchers and reading public.

By the mid 1970s the protest against that total brain-control couldn't have been concealed any more and it burst out. An unofficial Soviet art at that time had been well known abroad but at home we witnessed the first public exhibitions of the Soviet underground art only in 1974 and 1975. It was a great scandal about the first one. It was moved away by the bulldozers and the fire-machines smashing and watering the paintings and painters at the exhibition site. The artists became the real heroes having been suppressed by the State. They were opposing the official art and considered themselves to be progressive avanguard artists. But in fact «progressive» was only the act of protest, not the art itself. What had been vanguard in the early 20-th century could hardly pretend to be progressive in the last quarter of the century. It's not the fault of that brave artists. It's just a sad story how they'd been seeking for the new ideas and forms in art challenging the official trends, taking a risk, having found their own path, but they didn't happen to know that the same path had been already passed by the Russian artists more than 50 years ago.

The state policy had to be changed. It was decided to be less harm to «let the steam out» along with controlling the main official trends. So gradually the public got acquainted with the few examples of the non-official Soviet art and masterpieces of Western art kept in foreign collections. Even the personal exhibition of Marc Chagall took place at the Tretyakov Gallery in 1975. The vivid picture of the art process of the late 19-century to the late 1920s had been revealed as late as in 1981 at the great *Moscow-Paris* exhibition. It was a kind of explosion of the public interest to the home art demonstrated at that significant exhibition. A good number of new names in Russian art were introduced to the public. But the fact, that the French edition of the catalogue of that exhibition had got the hexagon, meant that even as late the Soviet exhibition visitors were shown less than their French colleagues.

The biggest problem was that of learning of the «foreign language» of the contemporary Western art, truly foreign for both artists and public. The creators and spectators found themselves both illiterate and had to take the same intensive course. It was the most interesting to witness that overwhelming progress in the whole cultural life of the country. At once there appeared thousands of private art galleries, art shops, exhibitions. Art auctions became a regular event. New titles of the art periodicals started to be published. The old ones often failed to win the competition at the new art market.

Cultural life of the recent years became kaleidoscopic offering a great variety of choice for the art lovers. Socialist realism is now present again but this time because it's just in fashion along with many other styles and manners. The

exhibition policies of galleries and museums is no longer dictated by the state censors. A number of big exhibitions revealed the very work of the communist censorship, like the *Gold of Schliemann, The Unknown Masterpieces, 500 years of the European Drawing*, for the first time exhibiting the art works which had been brought from Germany as the war trophies. *Moscow-Berlin* exhibition was one of the kind nobody could ever have dreamed about in the Soviet times; the parallels and links between the Stalinist art and that of the Third Reich looked too obvious.

What should the art libraries do in this circumstances? Should they become real navigators in the flood of visual information, swept over society? Do they have enough tools to undertake this job and enough skills to judge themselves without any official guidance? Do they have to get involved in the battle for good public taste, for raising the general cultural literacy of artists and spectators or should they stay indifferent to the real art process, just collecting and preserving the information for the future researchers? My answer is YES, the art librarians should get involved in the most exciting process of creation of the new cultural and informational environment in the country now opened to the rest the world, trying at the same time to leave the thorough documentation of our peculiar time.

Olga Sinitsyna
M. I. Rudomino All Russia State Library for Foreign
Literature
1 Nikoloyamskaya Street
109189 Moscow
Russia
Fax: ++7 095 9153637

THE DUTCH LIBRARY IN PARIS - A FOREIGN CULTURAL INSTITUTE LIBRARY WITH A SPECIAL CHARACTER*

By Anneke Kerkhof

Abstract: The library of the Fondation Custodia and the Institut Néerlandais has been a well-known Institution in Paris ever since its foundation by Frits Lugt (50 and 40 years ago, respectively). The following will describe and compare different foreign cultural institutes in Paris and specifically their libraries. Furthermore, the unique character of the Dutch collection will be highlighted, as well as the way in which the Library is adapting to new techniques : of special interest will be the development of special links with other art libraries, e.g the Institut National de l'histoire de l'art (INHA) in Paris and the Rijksbureau voor kunsthistorische documentatie (RKD) in the Hague.

1. Introduction

The collection of the Dutch connoisseur and art collector Frits Lugt is housed in the 18th century Hôtel Turgot, 121 Rue de Lille, in the elegant seventh arrondissement of Paris. It is currently managed by the Fondation Custodia. The Lugt family spent the second world war in the United States and was very impressed by the initiatives taken by private collectors in the United States. So they decided in 1947 to follow their example and to donate the capital necessary for the establishment of the Fondation Custodia, thus ensuring that their work could be continued after their death.

The Institut Néerlandais occupies the street side building of 121 Rue de Lille, the Hôtel Levis Mirepoix. The Institut Néerlandais was founded in 1957 again at the initiative of Frits Lugt, this time in partnership with the Dutch government. Given that the original plan to set up an art centre in the Netherlands failed, it was decided to opt for a location in Paris, France, the second homeland of Frits Lugt.

The Institut Néerlandais and Fondation Custodia, founded by the same man, and sharing the same address are still closely linked today. The Custodia staff regularly organises exhibitions in the Institut Néerlandais and edits the catalogues. For example, the exhibition "Rembrandt et son école, dessins de la collection Frits Lugt" was organised in 1997 and shown in the Institut Néerlandais. It was also shown at the Teyler's Museum in Haarlem. Similarly,

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some of the concerts organised by the Institut Néerlandais staff are given in the elegant salons of the Fondation Custodia.

There is no doubt that the library is the area where the two institutions come together: visitors to the library consult books owned either by the Fondation Custodia or by the Institut Néerlandais. The books share the same bookshelves, only their ex libris is different. Of the two librarians one is employed by the Fondation Custodia, the other by the Institut Néerlandais. As a result, the library's operation and management is probably where the spirit of its founder Frits Lugt has been most respected.

2. History

Frits Lugt was not only an art collector but also an eminent scholar. He compiled catalogues of the collections of Dutch and Flemish drawings of the Louvre, the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.

His name is also associated with two unrivalled works of reference : *The marques de collections* (1921, supplement in 1956) and the *Répertoire des catalogues de ventes publiques 1600-1825*, 4 volumes (1938, the last volume appeared in 1987 after his death). It may seem amazing nowadays that a Dutchman could write those works in French but in those times (the first volume appeared in 1921) French was the language used by art dealers and auction houses.

When Frits Lugt worked at the auction house of Frederik Muller & Co in Amsterdam, his primary occupation was compiling auction catalogues. This may have been the reason he later put together the "*Répertoire des catalogues de ventes*" (index of auction catalogues). The basis for this index was his own collection of auction catalogues, which he later donated to the 'Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie' (RKD) in The Hague, where the collection is still located today. He was particularly attached to this institution since its foundation in 1930, and supported it by donating his art library, his collection of reproductions as well as paying for a number of subscriptions.

The collection of Frits Lugt includes prints, drawings, artists' letters, paintings, portrait miniatures, manuscripts, indian miniatures and last but not least the art library.

When Frits Lugt created the Fondation Custodia he started building up another art library having donated his former collection to the RKD. When first starting to build his collection, his interest was mainly in drawings, prints and old books. He especially liked illustrated books, the subjects of which were very diverse, e.g. a fencing manual, a book about the care and the use of the crossbow, emblem books

etc. In fact Frits Lugt strove to recreate a 17th century gentleman's ideal library. Furthermore, he specifically acquired books that would support his art collection. This is still one of the principles behind the current acquisitions policy, except with Dutch art and literature, where the objective is to build a comprehensive collection.

This collection has recently been extended even more, and complemented by publications in many other areas.

3. Library Collection

The Library shared by the Institut Néerlandais and Fondation Custodia consists of approximately 200 000 titles (250 subscriptions included).

The main emphasis of the collection was, and still remains today, Dutch art and literature, but it also contains a significant element of foreign art history.

a) ART HISTORY

The main objective of the art history collection is to give a complete picture of what is published on Dutch art, both domestically and abroad. In addition, the emphasis is placed on the acquisition of general works of reference, monographs about Dutch artists, and catalogues of Dutch Museums (both catalogues describing the museum's possessions as exhibition catalogues on foreign artists).

Furthermore, the collection includes a large number of monographs about non-Dutch artists : the French, English, German and Italian artists are particularly well represented. Regarding foreign artists, the emphasis is placed on the period up to 1900.

A substantial part of the collection is also dedicated to catalogues of museums and private collections world wide - trying to be as complete and up to date as possible for the French museum and exhibition catalogues - as well as auction catalogues since 1960. Moreover, the Library contains a compilation of works analysing drawings and prints, collector's works, Indian and Persian miniatures, as well as memorial publications by and for art historians (*libri amicorum* and so on).

Finally a large selection of international periodicals is also available.

b) OLD EDITIONS

The substantial collection of old editions - put together by Frits Lugt and continually expanded after his death in 1970 - is managed by the Fondation Custodia in the Hôtel Turgot. The purpose of his collection was to give a comprehensive overview of the highly advanced production of books in the

Netherlands in the 16th, 17th and the 18th centuries, and specifically the production of illustrated books. The collection's themes - to name just a few - represent works and sources on art history, emblems, song books, topographic and historiographic works, travel descriptions, works on natural sciences, triumphalia and calligraphy. The works of the most influential writers and critics of those times are also available, often in the first or early editions, as well as works of Dutch authors published in France (and vice-versa), and early translations in Dutch or French literature.

c) AUTOGRAPHS

The autographs (more than forty thousand of them) form a fascinating part of the collection. The majority are letters by Western European artists from the Renaissance to the present as well as letters from collectors, connoisseurs, and art historians. They perfectly complement the drawings collection, by highlighting the relationship between the handwriting of an artist and his/her drawing style.

Most appealing are the letters illustrated with sketches, such as Albrechts Dürer's letter including the drawing of a rose, a brush and a dog, the Matisse letter with the sketch of his Italian model Lorette. There is also Jozef Israels letter written in French to Mr. Pelgeram and Mr. Lefevre in London, and embellished with a 'Rembrandtlike' sketch or, in a different style, the delightful letter of George Lemmen to Mrs Weber where he describes and illustrates his journey back home.

d) LITERATURE

Modern Dutch literature (after 1945) is kept systematically up to date, as well as the translation of Dutch literature into French. The fact that the Netherlands was chosen as the central theme of the Frankfurter Messe in 1994 was instrumental in helping to alter the preconceived notion that the Netherlands is only able to world-class painting. Dutch literature, for adult and for children, has been translated in dozens of languages ever since. The library also holds a representative selection of older Dutch literature, of history in general and history of Dutch literature and book production in particular (typography, illustrations, printing, editing, ex libris and publishing).

4) Comparison with libraries of other Cultural Centres in Paris

There are over forty different foreign cultural centres in Paris, some countries such as Italy, Germany, Poland or Portugal having more than one.

The objective of the following is to compare the most important and interesting ones, from the point of view of their history, their collection, or the activities they organise.

First, we must differentiate between cultural institutes belonging to a big organisation such as the Goethe Institut, the British Council, the Centre Culturel Cervantes or the Canadian Cultural Centre and the "others", more atypical ones, such as the Centre Culturel Suédois, the Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, the Institut du Monde Arabe and the Bibliothèque Polonaise de Paris.

The common thread to all these cultural centres is that they are a showcase of their country, they promote the country's culture and their libraries clearly reflect this. The exception to this is the American Library in Paris which caters to Americans living in Paris. It is the kind of library you typically find "back home" in the United States (comparable to public libraries in the Netherlands). There is a big library (approximately 100 000 volumes), exclusively in English, although the authors can be foreign; a large children's section is also available. Most members of the Library are Americans, though French people can sign up as well; in fact the library is extremely popular with French high school students. The library of the American University in Paris is not included in this conference as it is only open for their own students and teachers.

The four main centres of Germany, Great Britain, Spain and Canada have several things in common. The staff members are usually diplomats specialised in cultural affairs and all four of them are mainly language centres. Their most important activity is teaching, promoting the language and translating literature. They essentially act as a kind of information desk, answering a great variety of questions related to their country. They deal with exchange programs between universities, with student scholarships, and also liaise between artists and the art galleries in Paris. While they have reference books in many fields (economics, politics, history, literature and art history), their libraries invariably focus on literature, going so far in some cases as to close the art section (e.g. the British Council), apparently for lack of demand. Film, video and music are generally well represented and visitors have (often free) access to Internet. Their visitors are mostly French.

What makes these centres most interesting are their specific activities.

For example :

1. The British Council acts as an agent for the British Library in London. It is even one of their main activities as they have over 1000 clients in France for whom they do everything from doing research to keeping the accounts.
2. The Centre Culturel Canadien systematically searches archives in Paris and the rest of France in order to discover and to study the historical links between Canada and France.

3. The Centre Culturel Cervantes holds all the bibliographic data of the Spanish National Library as well as an index of all theses and university libraries.

4. The different Goethe Institutes in France have all their specialties: theatre and dance in Lyons, children's literature in Nancy, architecture and urban development in Lille and philosophy, literature and economics in Paris.

Of the smaller organisations the following cultural centres are interesting in comparison with the Institut Néerlandais/Fondation Custodia : the Centre Culturel Suédois, the Institut du Monde Arabe, the Centre Culturel Portugais/ the Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian and the Bibliothèque Polonaise de Paris.

The Centre Culturel Suédois, called the Tessin Institute and founded in 1933, is the only Swedish Cultural Centre abroad and also the first foreign cultural centre in Paris; the other cultural centres were only established after the Second World War. The initiative for the Tessin Institute was taken by the Swede Gunnar W. Lundberg, an art amateur, maecenas and cultural counselor at the Swedish embassy, together with the Swedish government. The goal was to promote cultural and artistic exchanges between France and Sweden. The majority of the collection (approximately 6000 objects) as well as the library has been donated by Gunnar W. Lundberg.

The paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints and decorative art (mostly 18th century) are exclusively of Swedish artists, or French artists influenced by Sweden and vice-versa. The same is true for the library, which is specialised in the relations between France and Sweden. The library has been entirely merged with the Nordic Library (Bibliothèque Nordique) which - thanks to this donation - now holds a very significant 160 000 volumes, and is located at the university library the "Bibliothèque Geneviève" in Paris. This very complete Nordic Library is entirely integrated in this Parisian university library and represents a unique source for researchers.

The Cultural Centre itself now holds only a small library of general more encyclopaedic works (approximately 6000 volumes).

Portugal has several cultural centres : The Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, l'Institut Comoes - in charge of the language courses in Paris -, the Cap Magellan centre and the Centre Culturel Portugais which reports to the ministry of foreign affairs. The main interest of these centres are the relations between Portugal and France. Their activities include organising concerts, conferences, meetings with writers, translators, and so on. The Cap Magellan centre has a younger, mostly Portuguese public, and organises forums that help mediate between students and companies. The Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, an emanation of the

Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian in Lissabon, is from our point of view the most interesting one.

The centre is endowed with significant funds, a famous art collection and a very important art library in Lisbon. Their library in Paris is more encyclopedic in nature but still has a small but choice collection. It is specialised in all matters Portuguese, whether direct or through the Portuguese influence in the world. Visitors are mostly students, scholars and professors from all over the world. A very important activity is the publication of works in French that relate to Portugal. One of their creations is the collection: "Poètes et prosateurs du Portugal" (Portuguese poets and writers). Every year they publish a volume of ARCHIVES with articles on the findings of Lusitanian scholars. Doctorate theses and historical or archeological essays are also regularly published by the centre. Finally, financial aid is granted for translations from Portuguese into French.

The "Institut du monde arabe", the IMA is again very different. It does not represent one single country but all the different Arab states (les pays arabes réunis), and are specialised in everything that relates to the Arab world. The Institute opened its doors in 1987 and is housed in a prestigious modern building on the banks of the Seine. It was managed by a Foundation, but the funding, which was intended to be sufficient to finance the Institution, ended up being fully used for the construction of the - very expensive - building. As a result, the Institute is now financed for over 50% by the French Government, the remaining part coming from the different Arab States. The spacious library, which is a very busy and lively place, is managed by 24 people and seats 150 people.

The IMA collection is very encyclopedic and literary in nature, and consists of approximately 60 000 books of which 650 are ancient, 1250 periodicals and a very substantial number of microfiches. It is also the only centre in Paris where everything is computerised. Access is free everywhere, except for the ancient books and the Ninard collection. This collection, donated by Ninard who lives in Paris and still visits occasionally the centre, consists of precious and ancient travel books about Marocco.

Poland has two cultural centres in Paris. The first one is sponsored by the Polish government, has a very small general library, and no budget at all.

The books are chosen by the Polish government and then sent to Paris. The second centre is "la bibliothèque polonaise de la Société historique et littéraire polonaise de Paris" and is fascinating. It is not a cultural centre in the strict sense of the word, but a literary society founded in 1832 by Polish emigrants following the defeat of the Polish people in 1930 by the Russian Tsar Nicolas 1st. The

Society was fully independent from the start, and remains so to this day: it is funded through members' contributions and donations. The description of the society as "literary" is in fact misleading, as the aim of the society was really political, especially in the early days. The main objective of the society was to collect and disseminate information relating to the history and future of Poland, as well as more contemporary subjects : the intent was to consolidate and maintain the international awareness of, and support to the Polish cause. In some way Paris became the intellectual capital of Poland.

The Library was open to any scholar, kept precious manuscripts and sponsored publications. The different directors in charge bequeathed to the Society many public and private archives, such as the collection of books, manuscripts, prints and paintings from the famous Polish writer Adam Mickiewicz.

The size and quality of the collections at the Polish Library make it one of the most prestigious in Paris. The library contains approximately 220 000 books and documents, mostly about Poland, of which 90 000 have no bindings (loose pages). Among the most treasured works are : the 3 first editions of Copernicus, one of the first editions of Martin Luther, as well as old Polish and French works about law and political science from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

The press and periodicals number over 2000 titles, of which some extremely rare collections of Polish daily papers from 19th and 20th centuries.

Furthermore, the Library holds a very large collection of geographical maps and atlases, and a significant archive collection about the history of Polish immigration. Also, a collection of the illegal underground press is available, as Paris was one of the most important centres of the clandestine press during the Solidarnosc period since 1981.

Among the many manuscripts and autographs, we find letters of Polish kings, of other European monarchs or popes, of Frédéric Chopin and Victor Hugo, a letter (in French) by Goethe, and many others. The Society is continuously enriching its collection but is currently more focused on renovating its beautiful, if decaying premises on the quai d'Orléans.

The art collections (approximately 20 000 objets) consist of paintings and sculptures by Polish immigrants, but also contain engravings, prints, posters and photographs. Souvenirs from Chopin are kept in a small parlour : prints, engravings, portraits and mortuary masks.

It is clear from the above that the collection of the Institut Néerlandais and the Fondation Custodia is truly unique. Not only is the size of the common Library

impressive (only the Polish Library is comparable in terms of number of volumes), it is also of great importance that the art collection and the documentation are located in the same place. This is usually only true for the largest institutions. Besides being the centre for Dutch art and owning a world famous collection, which is regularly exhibited on its own premises, exhibitions of Dutch art from other collections are organised. Custodia staff are also helpful in documenting the stock of Dutch paintings in France: for example, an exhibition has been organised last spring in the Institut Néerlandais about the Dutch and Flemish paintings of the Fabre museum in Montpellier. This has followed similar exhibitions of paintings from the Lyons and Quimper museums. The presence of the art historical library, and especially the art collection have largely contributed to making the Institut Néerlandais one of the most famous cultural centres of Paris.

5. Technological progress and cooperation with the Bibliothèque des Arts

The computerisation of all the Institut Néerlandais/Fondation Custodia collections has not been completed yet. Access to books on Dutch art and literature acquired prior to 1988 happens via a card system; books purchased after 1988 are accessible via a computer program (Strix - Dosis).

The same applies to old editions which are catalogued in the card system of the Library. The collection of autographs is accessible for the Custodia staff via a special cardsystem up to 1990; autographs purchased after 1990 are accessible via the Micromusées computer program, which is used by 50 museums in France. (excluding the d'Orsay Museum and the Louvre museum, except for the photographic collection) and a few in Britain, Switzerland, Belgium and Canada. The marques de collection (collection of seals) have also been entered in an Access database.

The existing cooperation with the Bibliothèque des Arts in Paris is of great importance to the Library. An organisation is currently being created - the Institut National de l'Histoire de l'Art (INHA) - to coordinate between the four main art libraries in Paris: the Bibliothèque d'art et d'archéologie (Doucet), the Bibliothèque Centrale des Musées Nationaux, the Bibliothèque des Beaux Arts and the Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes. All four have far-reaching plans to integrate their libraries :

- a joint Internet site
- the possibility to consult all four libraries from all locations * the use of a single computer program
- the coordination of purchasing policies etc.

It has been agreed that the Library of the Institut Néerlandais and the Fondation Custodia will contribute to this coordination effort, in order to streamline the information on art history between the libraries in Paris. This will enable the consultation of all available information via a common computer network. The vision is to include, at a later stage, institutions from all over France.

Unfortunately, final decisions will only be taken in June 1998 by the relevant authorities. I therefore hope to be able to update you on this system in August.

Résumé

Le collectionneur d'art Frits Lugt a créé en 1947 la Fondation Custodia et en 1957 (avec l'aide du gouvernement néerlandais) l'Institut Néerlandais.

La Fondation Custodia gère la collection d'art tandis que l'Institut Néerlandais organise des concerts, des conférences, des expositions, des cours de langues, le tout centré sur la culture néerlandaise. Les deux institutions, bien que très distinctes, sont étroitement liées, surtout les bibliothèques qui ne diffèrent que par leur ex libris. En effet, Frits Lugt possédait en plus de sa collection de dessins, peintures et gravures une bibliothèque impressionnante d'histoire de l'art qui a été considérablement enrichie ces dernières années. Les collections jointes des bibliothèques comprennent environ 200000 volumes (dont 250 périodiques). L'objectif de la collection est d'offrir une image aussi complète que possible des beaux arts et arts décoratifs des Pays-Bas et des Flandres. La collection d'ouvrages anciens offre une vue d'ensemble des livres produits aux 16e, 17e & 18e siècles. Les autographes d'artistes (plus de 40.000) forment une partie fascinante de la collection. La collection de littérature néerlandaise comprend de la prose aussi bien que de la poésie, tant en néerlandais qu'en traduction française.

Une comparaison avec un nombre d'autres bibliothèques de centres culturels parisiens nous montre le caractère unique de l'Institut Néerlandais. Tous les centres culturels sont en quelque sorte une vitrine de leur pays, et leurs bibliothèques en sont le reflet. Ce sont principalement des bibliothèques générales, encyclopédiques, politiques, économiques et littéraires. Ces instituts coordonnent l'octroi de bourses d'étudiants, offrent des cours de langues et de traduction, et organisent des expositions itinérantes sur le pays en question. De plus, ces instituts jouent souvent le rôle d'agents entre les galeries et les artistes. Les exceptions à ce schéma sont le centre culturel suédois fondé par le mécène Gunnar W. Lundberg et la société historique et littéraire de Pologne, intéressante par sa collection et par son histoire politique.

Afin d'améliorer la gestion, la bibliothèque de l'Institut Néerlandais et de la Fondation Custodia est en cours d'informatisation. Enfin, une collaboration étroite avec la grande bibliothèque des arts (INHA) à Paris est prévue pour la fin de l'année, ce qui permettra une amélioration sensible du service pour les utilisateurs.

Anneke Kerkhof
Institut Néerlandais
121 rue de Lille
75007 Paris, France
Fax.: ++33 1 45560077
<biblioth@inst-neerlandais.fr>

KALEIDOSCOPIIC CLASSIFICATIONS: REDEFINING INFORMATION IN A WORLD CULTURAL CONTEXT*

By Barbara Mathé

Abstract: The cultural confluence that humanity has been witnessing over the last century began with the technological leaps in travel and communication in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Africa, Oceania and the Americas, stories and images of the colonialists and their homeland were sometimes as fanciful as the early western descriptions of exotic lands. The turn of the century populace in Europe and the United States, unsteadied by the overwhelming change in world society, sought a reassuring order in the organized array of the International Expositions. This order was manifest in the social evolutionist classification schemes devised to arrange the exhibits. One of these systems devised for the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition had a far reaching but unacknowledged effect on western epistemology. Apparently, Melvil Dewey used the scheme as the basis for his Decimal Classification System. A visual illustration of one of these classification schemes is apparent in a collection of photographs of indigenous people from Africa, Asia, North and South America who were exhibited at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition.

In 1819 Sir David Brewster described his invention of a viewing mechanism, a cylinder in which mirrors were set at angle. He called it a Kaleidoscope, „beautiful-image viewer“ in Greek. The device created its beautiful images by collecting and combining different points of view into a single arrangement.¹ This paper is about perception and point of view. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, they are not identical. Perceptions are based on point of view. As in the kaleidoscope, perceptions are based on combinations--*collections* of numerous points of view. This fact is acknowledged in the art of the cubists. It can be seen in the art of the indigenous people of the Northwest Coast of North America.. It is the basis of motion picture production. It is essential to understanding how collections of images acquire meaning.

Collections are the basis of systematic observation. Without the opportunity to compare or contrast—to discern the similarities and differences among objects--knowledge would not be possible. Traditionally, classifying objects in a collection serves two purposes; first, to name the item—in the tradition of Linnean

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¹ Gombrich. E.H., *The Sense of Order*, London 1979, 149.

nomenclature--according to similarities of features, and second—in the tradition of Cutter’s collocation--to locate the item in place, preferably adjacent to other items which share similar features. How one arranges and describes objects in a collection defines the scheme of knowledge. There can be more than one single scheme of knowledge. Like the view through the kaleidoscope, the same collection of objects or images may be rearranged to create a different order. For example, natural history classification has changed radically with the introduction of cladistics.

Classification schemes were an integral part of American International Expositions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Louisiana Purchase Exposition held in St. Louis in 1904 continued the tradition of the World’s Fairs of the previous half-century, extolling the virtues of the progress of Euro-American society. The essential message was the celebration of the modernist idea that the social evolution of the human race had reached its height in the rational order provided by scientific and technological advances.² Modernism as defined by Vaclav Havel could be defined as „a period dominated by the belief that the world is a wholly knowable system governed by a finite number of universal laws that might be grasped and used for the benefit of mankind.“³ But the rapidity of social change unsteadied the Euro-American populace which had moved from horse-drawn carriages, engravings and sailing ships to automobiles, moving pictures, telephones and flying machines in less than fifty years.

Travel, while a growing phenomenon, was still restricted to the few, but the increasing numbers of illustrated newspapers and magazines brought the outside world closer to home. Stereographs were so widespread in the second half of the nineteenth century that they have been called the first form of visual mass media. The inevitable centerpiece of the Victorian parlor was the stereograph where three dimensional representations of faraway places and unimaginable people were a source of fascination. Meanwhile the inhabitants of these now less distant lands were also being affected by growing contact with more technologically oriented nations.* Colonialism and acculturation were often the result. The world was becoming smaller.

² Rydell, Robert W., *All the World’s a Fair, Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*, Chicago, 1984, 2-4.

³ Havel, Vaclav, *The End of the Modern Era*, New York Times, June 24, 1992

* Indigenous classification systems have been largely ignored and deserve closer examination.

The International Expositions provided a reassuring order firmly based on the epistemological authority of scientists and the social authority of those responsible for production. It was manifest in the classification schemes devised to arrange the exhibits at the expositions. William Phipps Blake, a geologist, exhibition specialist and descendant of early Massachusetts settlers, devised a scheme for the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Beginning with raw materials and proceeding to food, clothing, furniture, tools, manufactures and architecture and culminating in intellectual and artistic achievements, the displays were arranged, as noted by the March 4, 1876, New York Times, „to carry the spectator through the successive steps of human progress.“ Blake’s system had a far reaching if unacknowledged effect on western epistemology. Apparently, Melvil Dewey used the scheme as the basis for his Decimal Classification System.

„A Universal Exposition is a vast Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology, of man and his works“ proclaimed F.J.V. Skiff, Director of the exhibits at St. Louis. His classification scheme for the Fair was structured to describe an ideal „composite of man,“ composed of aspects of each of the sixteen departments. Within each of the departments, the exhibits were arranged in a „sequential synopsis of the developments that have marked man’s progress.“ The entire arrangement was based on the social evolutionist belief in the gradual progression of mankind culminating in the superiority of the white Euro-American (male).

To illustrate the point, thousands of indigenous people were collected and brought from around the globe to be displayed at the St. Louis Fair for anthropological comparison, not only in the Department of Anthropology but on the Pike (the amusement area) and in the U.S. Government sponsored Philippine Exhibition. The directors intended to establish a „comprehensive Anthropological Exhibition, constituting a congress of races and exhibiting, particularly the barbarous and semi-barbarous people of the world.“

William J. McGee, appointed to head the anthropology department, had rated the peoples of the world in four culture grades, savagery, barbarism, civilization and enlightenment. His statement outlined the purpose of the Anthropology Department at the St. Louis Fair: „to represent human progress from the dark prime to the highest enlightenment, from savagery to civic organization, from egoism to altruism. The method will be to use living peoples in their accustomed avocations as our great object lesson.“⁴

⁴ Ibid. Rydell, p. 159-162

The concept of object lesson had been promoted 15 years before by G. Brown Goode, Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Recognizing the increasing prominence of visual information in the late 19th century, Goode advocated visual means of education. When called upon to create the classification system for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, he described his vision of the Fair as „an illustrated encyclopedia of civilization.“

The photographic collection at the American Museum of Natural History holds over 300 original prints and glass plate negatives taken of the anthropological exhibits at the St. Louis Fair. Formerly under the auspices of the museum's education department, the collection is mounted on cards and had been loosely arranged by category in file cabinets with no regard for provenance. The photographs from St. Louis were discovered and found to be taken by a woman named Jessie Tarbox Beals, an official photographers at the fair and one of the first women photojournalists in the United States. For years, the Beals Collection was dispersed within the archive, primarily by geographic designation, and used, like the exhibits themselves, to illustrate life in the native lands of the people on display at the Fair. The reunified collection graphically illustrates the social Darwinist classification schemes prominent at the time as well as the contemporary attitudes to visual display and education at the turn of the century.

The photographs taken on the Pike most dramatically illustrate the post-modern spectacle of disconnected representation. A picture captioned „Eskimeaux Hut“ records the conglomeration of imagery found in the Eskimo Village. Centered in front of what appears to be a large painted backdrop is a tiny log cabin, not large enough for a grown man to stand. Sitting, rather forlornly, in the doorway is an Inuit man and a child about two years old. In the front of the building is a curved track on which sit another child, and two huskies. To the right of the little cabin is a reconstruction of a plains Indian teepee and to the left, a miniature totem pole, both generalized symbols of exotic Indians still found at tourist attractions today with no regard for the fact that vastly different cultures, separated by thousands of miles are exhibited as a whole.

The Cliff Dwellers exhibit was a standard on the Exposition Midway Circuit. The mock pueblo structure, included Hopi and Zuni people from the U.S. Southwest. Beals photographed the exhibit, posing many of the people in front. However, she apparently borrowed at least two men, possibly from the Cummins Indian Congress down the Pike, who with their Plains feather headdresses better fit the requisite stereotype of the American Indian.

There were, in effect, two types of Anthropology exhibits, one presided over by showmen, the other by scientists. The result was a blurring of the distinction between scientific representation and diversion. The concessions on the Pike assumed the authority of the scientists, while the Anthropology Department and the Philippine Exhibition were often viewed with the same merriment as the Pike.

McGee's emphasis on the study of „savages“ and „barbarians“ resulted in an Anthropology Department collection of non-white people who had no real national representation. These were people without political power, aboriginal peoples from all parts of the globe; the Ainu from Northern Japan, the „Giant Patagonians“ (Tehuelche) from Argentina, pygmies from Africa, the Kwakiutl (Kwakwaka'wakw) from British Columbia and various Native American tribes from within the U.S., including Chief Joseph, Quannah Parker and Geronimo, who was on display as a prisoner of the United States Government.

Beals would often make a point of showing exhibited people being gawked at by the curious and leering fairgoers. In one photograph, „Ainu Woman Making Mats for Wall and Door Hangings,“ she took the subject's point of view. In the center of the picture is the Ainu woman weaving, her young boy on the left behind her weaving frame. Directly behind her, stooping down to peer through the doorway are a group of fairgoers, behatted, starched and grinning. The Ainu woman's head is turned away from their stare.

Beals photographed Ota Benga, an African pygmy, who later acquired some notoriety for having been exhibited after the St. Louis Fair, at the New York Zoological Gardens in the primate cage. Less known is the fact that Samuel Verner, the missionary/amateur anthropologist responsible for bringing Ota Benga to the Fair, returned to the Congo with Ota Benga and demonstrated what had transpired in St. Louis by sitting on a rocking chair on display in an enclosure, reading and smoking a pipe while listening to a gramophone.⁵

The Philippine „Reservation“ was arguably one of the first theme parks. Sponsored by the U.S. Government under the auspices of the War Department^{*}, it was inhabited by over 1,400 Filipino men, women and children. Villages of the various Filipino „types“ surrounded a central plaza of official buildings, Government, Forestry, Commerce, Education, etc., echoing the classification of the Fair itself. The evolution of the Filipino was illustrated in the 1904 World's

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Bradford, Phillips Verner and Harvey Blume. *Ota Benga: The Pygmy at the Zoo*, New York, p. 139

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The United States had recently acquired the Philippines as a possession as a result of the 1898 treaty ending the Spanish-American War.

Fair Bulletin, beginning with the Negritos, „the lowest type of humans in the islands,“ Next above were the Igorot, „capable of much higher development.“ The Moro were described as „Fierce Mohammedan Fighters.“ The Visayan (Christian converts) were shown in western dress and described as a „high type of native people.“ Finally, at the pinnacle, the Spanish-Filipino Mestizo family was described as „highly educated and refined.“

Beals captured the implicit messages of racial hierarchy structured into the Fair in her photographs. She shows two Visayan woman, both in American style dress. One is sewing manufactured cloth on a sewing machine, the other stands in a doorway. The Visayan, both Christianized and acculturated, were ranked highest among the Filipino people on display. In contrast, „Igorrote Women Weaving Cloth“ places the Igorrote at a lower level of development by virtue of their simple technology.

The American Museum of Natural History opened an enormous Philippine Hall in 1909, based on the collection of ethnographic material purchased from the St. Louis Exposition. Two photographs of Igorrote women weaving were used as visual references for life groups created for hall, which were obviously designed with the exposition displays in mind. In addition a number of Beals's photos were enlarged and displayed as transparencies in the Hall along with photographs actually taken in the Philippines. Until recently the same grouping existed in the photographic collection, where the Filipino images were filed under Philippines, the Kwakiutl under British Columbia and the Pygmy under Africa.

Curatorial duties of librarians and archivists in charge of photographic collections go beyond researching and mounting exhibitions. Collections formerly organized by subject should be reevaluated and rearranged, as much as possible, according to the two archival principles of provenance and original order. Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that arrangements are artificial structures. It is obvious that Beals herself used some of these images to represent people in their native lands and not in St. Louis. A number of the original negatives were retouched to remove traces of the Fair. In many cases it is impossible to tell by looking if the photographs were taken at the Fair or at home. And some of these pictures are still reproduced in books without mention of the Fair.

Mercifully we live in a world where the collections may be kept together according to archival principles while at the same multiple subject headings can provide greater access to the material. Digitization of photographic collections will also make it possible for the images to be used in many of the local museums being established by indigenous people. We can hope that their own subject

headings, meaningful to *their* cultural history might be added to the record and in some way add a different point of view to the meaning of the images.

Barbara Mathé
Department of Library Services
American Museum of Natural History
79 Street and Central Park West
NY 10024 New York
Fax: ++1 212 7695009
E-mail: mathe@amnh.org