

Libraries and the State: A Discussion of Complicity and Dual Power.

In September 2016, The Guardian ran a story titled “Borrowed Time: US library to enforce jail sentences for overdue books. The Athens-Limestone Public Library in Alabama, frustrated at the number of unreturned books and unpaid fines in its system, was planning to enforce city ordinance 93-1157. This ordinance states that

it is unlawful for any person who has a library card to “fail or refuse to return” any materials borrowed or withdrawn from the public library. Any person who violates the ordinance may receive a fine up of up to \$100, be sentenced to a city jail term of 30 days or possibly both at the discretion of the municipal judge.¹

The announcement of the strict enforcement of this policy was quickly denounced by many librarians as a violation of our basic principles. One librarian added that if reminders and other alternatives to jail time weren’t working, it indicated a breakdown of the library’s relationship with the community². This is a concrete example of an interesting tension within public libraries: on the one hand, the avowed mission of many libraries is to serve the information and social needs of their communities. For example, Edmonton Public Library’s values and mission statement prioritizes “sharing” and “community transformation”. On the other hand, public libraries are departments of municipal corporations, with a responsibility not only to uphold city policies, but to protect public money and property and (less obviously) to promote and uphold a vision of the world and a set of values endorsed and maintained by the capitalist state itself.

1

http://www.eneWSCourier.com/news/local_news/overdue-books-library-to-enforce-ordinance/article_746ed512-6f01-11e6-a0e5-53e37f6a8e2b.html

² <https://twitter.com/iNanner/status/772148465103204352>

While we are training to become librarians - public, academic, or otherwise - we tend to pride ourselves on the field's principles of social justice and community. When we start working, however, we find that we are often implicated in dynamics of power and structures of oppression which make it difficult to uphold these principles, and in many ways call into question the principles themselves. These issues are often ignored in professional discussions, especially within our organizations. Today I would like to talk about one of the structures of oppression in which we are embedded. There are many such structures that concern race, gender, sexuality, poverty, for example, but the structure of oppression I want to talk about is the connection of the library with both the monopoly of violence and the responsibility for social services possessed by the capitalist state.

Libraries have never been autonomous institutions. Today, academic libraries are part of universities, and public libraries are part of municipal corporations. This may seem like I'm stating the obvious, but what is interesting is the discourse of autonomy that arose in both academic and public libraries throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and which is still dominant today. Every so often a librarian will write about the "neutrality" of libraries, or a library organization will insist on the apolitical, independent nature of libraries. On the academic side the principle of academic freedom - purporting to mean independence from anything other than academic or intellectual responsibilities has become, on paper at least, a sacrosanct value of the academy and its libraries. On the public side, the idea of access to information for all citizens, independent of wealth, class, gender, intellectual orientation, etc, is also an avowed value. But how do these values square with the operation and behaviour of our parent organizations?

In 1991, Mark Rosenzweig, editor of *Progressive Librarian*, wrote that, while

most American librarians today take it for granted that our profession stands for the unequivocal defense of intellectual freedom, freedom of

speech, and a number of other very fine principles [...] this static image of librarianship is... a myth.³

Rosenzweig was writing in the context of an attempt to get the American Library Association to take a position on the first Gulf War and the consequent censorship by the US government. For Rosenzweig, it was precisely the apparent intrusion of politics into a supposedly neutral profession that made taking such a position so contentious to the ALA. But this intrusion was an illusion, as Rosenzweig goes on to remind us that politics and ideology have always been a structural component of libraries. This example provides a good illustration of the way a particular “common sense” tries to limit the context of a phenomenon (in this case, libraries), endeavouring to prevent “irrelevant” things like politics, social theory, and history from complicating or tarnishing a worldview or reputation. By linking the Gulf War and the history of libraries, Rosenzweig widens the context in order to create a critical perspective on the issue at hand. The continuing relevance of the Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) as well as newer movements like #critlib attest to the fact that such conflicts between neutrality and politics, of a dominant bourgeois “common sense” and resistance to it, also remain in full force.

The history of public libraries is inextricably linked with the development of capitalist society and the rise to power of the bourgeois class. As a result, from their inception, public libraries were implicated in the power and social control wielded by a new form of state: the liberal-capitalist governments of the mid-nineteenth century⁴. The role of public libraries in this period was to spread bourgeois ideology and to condition people to life under industrial capitalism. After the second world war, in what was called the post-war consensus which saw the rise of the welfare state, more importance was

³ Rosenzweig, Mark. “Politics and Anti-Politics in Librarianship”, in Alison Lewis (ed.) *Questioning Library Neutrality: Essays from Progressive Librarian*, Duluth: Library Juice Press, 2008: 5.

⁴ For an analysis of this period, see Alistair Black’s *New History of the English Public Library*, London: Bloomsbury, 1996.

given to the social and collective values of librarianship, as the capitalist state needed ways to deradicalize and quieten a working class that had been plunged in war and economic depression for the best part of thirty years.

The post-war consensus lasted until the mid-1970s when the rise of neoliberalism began dismantling the social programs of the welfare state and replacing collective values with a means-and-ends logic of economic efficiency which has led us, in the twenty-first century, to the predations of austerity and the worst financial crisis since 1929.

Much has been written over the last few years about the “corporatization” of the university. In the recent strike by the University of Manitoba Faculty Association - which includes librarians - among the five main issues was “the increased corporatization of the university which we believe is adversely thwarting the goals of university education”⁵. The interesting thing about this is the expression “increased corporatization”, which we can see in narratives surrounding many institutions believed to be intellectually independent and financially disinterested (such as, for example, in the recent US election, where liberals like Susan Sarandon could claim that the electoral system had been taken over by money, as if that had not always been the case). Universities have been aligned with corporate interests as long as the state has, but both university and state have wrapped themselves in ideologies of neutrality and independence.

In a recent blog post, U of M professor Henry Heller, author of the recently-published *The Capitalist University*⁶, talks about the rise of what he calls “academic capitalism” in the early 1980s. Academic capitalism, Heller writes, has forced universities to redefine

⁵ pAGES (The Association of Graduate English, Film, and Theatre Students) message of support. <http://www.umfa.ca/news/44-messages-of-support>

⁶ Heller, Henry. *The Capitalist University: The Transformations of Higher Education in the United States, 1945-2016*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

their mission as serving private business and themselves becoming as far as possible profit-orientated in their mode of operation and objectives. In the light of this academic capitalism new faculty, administrative and business networks sought to promote a cognitive capitalism, creating new forms of knowledge which could be more or less immediately commodified as intellectual property.⁷

But the fact that the alignment of corporate, political, and academic interests is now being recognized indicates that the ideology which had previously protected the academy and the state from anti-capitalist critique is failing. In some case, it has completely failed. The corporatization of the academy and the state is nothing new, but our recognition of it is - or is at least part of the historical moment in which we live.

In state-funded institutions, like academic and public libraries in Canada, the lines between the organization and the state is blurred. For public libraries, the management of the library *is* the state; for academic libraries, there is an attempt to be seen as independent from the state to maintain the illusion of academic freedom. But, to take an example that is close to home, the chair of the U of A Board of Governors is appointed by the lieutenant governor, that is, the province. The board has the ability to decide which employees are considered academic staff - i.e. which staff groups have academic freedom and which don't, and which staff groups are represented by which association for the purposes of collective bargaining. Political intrusion into an organization supposed to be intellectually and academically independent gets no clearer than this.

Since most academic librarians in Alberta are covered by the Post-Secondary Learning Act - including its language around labour - we aren't covered by the province's Labour Relations Act. One of the things enshrined in the PSLA

7

<https://plutopress.wordpress.com/2016/11/07/protesting-the-capitalist-university-by-henry-heller/>

is the denial of the right to strike. The Supreme Court of Canada, in January 2015, declared similar legislation in Saskatchewan to be unconstitutional, thus raising the question in Alberta whether to amend the PSLA to give us back a constitutionally-protected right to strike, or to remove all labour language from the PSLA and have our association become an actual union under the Labour Relations Act, with the protection of the Labour Board.

What should be immediately obvious here is that there is no option that does *not* involve structuring by the state. Either the PSLA governs us, or the LRA does. Our association has to be recognized and constituted by one piece of legislation or the other.

To my mind, then, even academics and librarians, as committed to intellectual independence as we are, are constrained in a double sense: we are both workers and agents of the state. We work for organizations enshrined in and enabled through legislation, but we are also workers in a state-managed relationship to an employer, and that employer is the state itself. What happens to the values and principles of librarians in such an ambiguous role? What happens to intellectual freedom when the very mission of the university has become to reproduce the values and ways of thinking of capitalism itself? Going back to the example with which I began this talk (the police-enforcement of library fine collection) it can be argued that our position within the network of state power is, in fact, contradictory.

For Marxists, the existence of contradictions is precisely what makes social change possible. Drawing on the work of Hegel, Marx developed an idea of history - social change over time - which saw such change as the process of contradictions coming into being, resolving themselves, and giving rise in turn to new contradictions. This process Marx called *the dialectic*, and in return for providing a theory of how change in the real world works, it requires a different way of thinking about the world as we see it.

Georg Lukacs, one of the main figures of Western Marxism, in his 1923 work *History and Class Consciousness*, argued that dialectical thought differed from mainstream science in an important respect. When a contradiction is identified, science (in this case social science) assumes that the contradiction reflects a mistake in our thinking, perhaps caused by a lack of some important piece of information⁸. When the new information is found, our thinking will be corrected, and the contradiction will disappear. Dialectical thinking, in Lukacs' view, sees contradictions as present *in reality*. They can be dismissed by scientific thinking, but that does not make the contradiction go away. In Marxist terms, it is precisely these contradictions that allow society to change over time.

So we have the contradiction between a supposedly independent intellectual profession and a working life in which we all have to pay the bills, with all the attendant compromises and power relationships that go along with this. We also have the contradiction between librarians as agents of the state and employees, that is enforcers of state policy, and its subjects. These contradictions are real, they won't go away with better information (or wishful thinking, like that from the presidents of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge, when they argue that labour rights will kill collegial governance⁹ - as if collegial governance existed in the first place).

We can see this contradiction play out everywhere. The number of strikes, lockouts, and other "labour actions" in libraries seems to have increased recently, but we're probably just more aware of them. In addition to the recent strike at U of M, Long Island University locked out its faculty and librarians in September, and Mississauga Public Library was on strike for nearly three weeks earlier this year. The discussions within the U of A faculty association around whether we should stick with labour language in the

⁸ Lukacs, Georg. "What is Orthodox Marxism?" in *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971: 1-26.

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http://www.provost.ualberta.ca/ProvostNews/~media/provost/Documents/20161021P_SLA_Labour_Relations_Consultation_Submission.pdf

PSLA or have our labour legislation taken over by the LRA is also evidence of how this contradiction plays out in real life.

But we aren't just employees. As agents of the state, it is our job to promote the policies of the state as they exist within the universities and the public library systems. We are expected to uphold the sanctity of the values of capitalist society, first and foremost the value of private property. We are complicit in the ideological reproduction of capitalist society through the very work that we do and the very policies that we uphold. A small fraction of us, it's true, have the protection of academic freedom, but an even smaller fraction ever actually use it. And in public libraries, the commitment to "intellectual freedom" that is enshrined in policy often falls prey to the requirement to protect the brand (because public libraries, like academic, are thought to exist at the pleasure or whim of our funding bodies, and we mustn't jeopardize that relationship).

Now, many academics and librarians would argue that through education they provide the tools to recognize and counter the spread of capitalist values. They may argue against corporate presences on campus. But capitalist values are more subtle than that. The fact that classes always start on time, that assignments have deadlines, that work is measured and evaluated through exams, all arose as a response to the requirements of factory work. The fact that these desks are all in rows mirrors the factory discipline of early industrial capitalism. This isn't to say that universities aren't providing education, but that *at the same time* they are reproducing the subtle ways of being in the world that capitalism requires of all of us. Another contradiction.

One of the problems with approaching these contradictions with scientific thinking, with imagining that more and better information will make the contradictions in our lives disappear, is that when they don't disappear, we can find ourselves at a loss, frustrated, hopeless. The world is alienating and cruel, and when the strategy of finding better information fails, our

frustrations increase, and we can find ourselves taking refuge in various things. The safest refuge is simply to stop thinking. The most dangerous is to succumb to an ideology of rage, of racism, fascism, sexism, and other forms of intolerance - the kind of thing which now seems likely to be enshrined in the presidency of Donald Trump. It is understandable that people fall sway to such ideologies - it is easier to blame the contradictions in our lives on others, and most people have no other way to think about their world. One of the consequences of this - bar the kind of race-war apocalypse predicted by every charlatan from Charlie Manson to David Duke - is that it makes a different world hard to imagine. Fredric Jameson wrote recently that it seems sometimes as if it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. For the contradictions that I've been talking about, the cruel and frustrating relationships between people that make us either check out or become fascists are not eternal (nothing is) - they are the product of particular ways of engaging with and working in the world that we call by the name of capitalism.

Is there, perhaps, another kind of thinking that might get us out of this impasse, this inability to imagine another kind of world? In his 2016 book *An American Utopia: Dual Power and the Universal Army*¹⁰, Jameson argues that utopian thinking - usually dismissed as unscientific and unrealistic - allows us to think seriously about alternatives under the guise of thinking unseriously. It is precisely its unscientific and unrealistic nature that makes utopian thinking worth deploying in the struggle to deal with the contradictions of our world and our profession.

Given that the capitalist values of efficiency, measurement, property, etc, are seen as "common sense", any idea or project which rejects these values will seem to us as irrational and unrealistic on their very face. Utopian thinking looks, at first glance, like the worst kind of fantasy, something not grounded at all in the realities of our world. But Jameson argues that it is precisely this

¹⁰ Jameson, Fredric. *An American Utopia: Dual Power and the Universal Army*. London: Verso Books, 2016.

that allows utopian thinking to avoid being caught in the lure of reproducing capitalist values. Also, the “cognitive shock”, the surprising audacity of utopian thinking, can make us see our world differently, can allow us to imagine things differently by letting us question the very common-sense truths of the world as we see it. To ask, “why can’t our world be different than it is?” Utopian thinking is limited by nothing but our imaginations. However, in the real world, all imagination runs inevitably into the immovable force that is the power of the state.

In the last 40 years, state power has been used increasingly to push through the reforms of the neoliberal project led by Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, Augusto Pinochet, and their clients in various other countries. Essentially, this meant dismantling the infrastructure of the welfare state in order to allow corporations to take over those services for profit. Historically, the abandonment of a society to capitalist enterprise (i.e. under classical liberalism in the later 19th century) has led to a decline in the standard of living and eventually to the rise of fascism both as a reaction to the capitalist takeover of social services, but also as the most efficient and effective way to organize society for the benefit of capitalism itself. 40 years into the neoliberal project, we are seeing the rise of the ultra-right across the developed world - most recently in the US - as the poor and the working class see their standard of living and their social safety-net decline under decades of neoliberal policy, blaming this on anyone but capital. Jameson’s theory of dual power, then, does not simply offer an alternative to neoliberal structures of government services but *now*, at this moment, it offers a potential way of arresting the slide into fascism that seems inevitable.

The starkest example of state power is the monopoly of violence, both in the forms of the army and the police (and these days the distinction is increasingly difficult to draw). Jameson asks the utopian question, “what if we were all members of the army?”, to which the answer in the US is, “well, we would all have health-care for the rest of our lives”. Jameson is obviously speaking about the American context, but the idea that joining the armed

forces entitles one to basic social services dates back at least to the GI Bill of 1944. Jameson takes this idea not to its logical, but to its utopian, conclusion, by asking what would happen if the army became *the mechanism* by which social services - the welfare state - were provided to citizens. In the face of an increasingly neoliberal (or, under Trump, perhaps increasingly fascist) state, how else would social services be provided to an increasingly abandoned populace?

Jameson links this idea with Lenin's formulation of dual power¹¹, where an alternative, non-state organization arises to provide social services in cases where the state has abdicated that role. In Lenin's case, this was the provisional government formed after the February revolution of 1917, but Jameson also sees dual power in the provision of "unofficial" social services by the Black Panthers in disadvantaged (i.e. Black) parts of the US, and Hamas in the occupied territories. In reading Jameson's book, I began to wonder - given the "increased corporatization" and the influence of the state in academia, as well as the "austerity" measures and the depredations of neoliberalism outside of academia - what role might libraries play in the institution of dual power in Canada, given that the importance of the army in Canadian society is not, for the moment anyway, as pronounced as it is in the US?

Jameson doesn't talk about libraries. He considers and dismisses various institutions (the church, the post office, the mafia) before settling on the army as his preferred institution of dual power. One of his criteria is distributed reach (like the post office - indeed, this argument was used during the lead up to this summer's CUPW strike which did not materialize¹²). Libraries, especially if we consider both academic and public, exist in every major centre, in every province and territory. Spatially, they are spread throughout the fabric of Canadian society.

¹¹ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/09.htm>

¹² <http://www.cupw.ca/en/campaigns-and-issues/postal-banking>

But ideologically too, libraries are woven into our culture. Indeed, this is one of the things that makes libraries so useful to capitalist society: libraries are machines for the reproduction of ideology. Indeed, the structure of libraries in this country mirrors the structure of that other ideological apparatus, the school system. Many of us were introduced to the public library at about the age we started school, or a little before. If we go on to post-secondary education, we tend to leave the public library behind, “graduating” to the academic library for *advanced* ideological reproduction. When we return to the public library as adults, the library is used less as a place of education or research, than as one out of a vast number of entertainment content providers, again, mirroring the ideological requirements of the state.

It is the ubiquity of libraries, both spatially and culturally, that makes them such good candidates for dual power. The infrastructure (i.e. interlibrary loan) is already present to move goods around the country. Many libraries already provide social services and outreach to the groups hit hardest by austerity and capitalist logic. Even our supposed neutrality and disinterestedness helps, by giving libraries a level of trustworthiness that few, if any, other institutions possess.

What Jameson (and Lenin) envisaged was a collective project to break away from the reliance on the state, a state which is subject not to the values and codes that we, as citizens, hold dear and important, a state which has only one value, the maintenance of the exploitative and oppressive system we call capitalism. This state abandons and oppresses all those who do not fit into the structure of capitalist production, holding out a promise of social welfare only if ways of life and struggle are given up. Dual power offers a collective project *in the face of* this state, it offers a chance for the recovery of at least a certain amount of agency and power by the collective. And it does this not by rebellion or uprising and not by trying to change the system from within, but by doing *something else*. The power of utopian thinking is that it allows us to imagine what that something else is - even if it's impossible, even if it's unrealistic - because it's tempting to think that the world will never change.

But not changing is impossible, the world will change whether we like it or not, the question is how we prepare to harness that change to fit our values - as librarians, as a collective, as a society - rather than have the world changed for us. Dual power, as an unrealistic, utopian idea, at least gives us a means to begin thinking this kind of change.

When I was in library school, our collection development class rehashed the Berninghausen Debate¹³. Essentially, the debate boils down to the social role of libraries, often framed as a debate over the “neutrality” of libraries. In terms of collection development, this ends up being a debate over giving users “what they want”¹⁴ (essentially, mass market commodities) or curating a collection with a social or political agenda in mind. I argued that mass-market commodities were immediately available to the vast majority of library users and that libraries should focus not only on the development of collections for the underserved (the homeless and immigrants, for example), but also on promoting materials that were not part of the continuum of mass-market commodities (alternative social or political theories, for example, or non-bestseller fiction). Given that bestseller fiction is available from any Chapters or airport bookstore (or online), it seemed ridiculous to devote library budget and display space to promote that material at the expense of other, less obvious, things. The counter to this argument, of course, was the supposed neutrality of libraries and collection policies, as well as the idea that we simply “give users what they want” (presuming that the wants of users are somehow not socially determined). The function of the library, I argued, was not in neutrally providing users access to content they somehow already desired, it was in producing and maintaining the desires for the commodities of capitalist culture itself.

¹³ A good explanation can be found in Joyce, “A Few Gates Redux: An Examination of the Social Responsibilities Debate in the Early 1970s and 1990”, in *Questioning Library Neutrality*, 33-66.

¹⁴ Rawlinson, Nora. “Give ‘em What They Want”, *Library Journal*, November 15, 1981.

Lately both public and academic libraries have begun to loan out material that explicitly seek to address social/cultural/health issues. The loan of internet hot spots by Toronto and Edmonton Public Libraries and SAD lamps by University of Alberta Libraries, are explicitly meant to address the digital divide on the one hand and the mental health of students on the other. What's interesting about this is that this places the library in the position of addressing problems which ought rightly to be addressed by the parent organization. The digital divide in a city ought to be addressed by the municipality; the mental health of students ought to be a concern of the university at large. By offloading these social services onto the library, the municipality is able to abdicate responsibility - a process inherent in the dismantling of the welfare state. When I was in Bournemouth in 2010, I was shown a flagship social centre within a public library branch. The centre was a library, but it contained offices for a social worker, employment officer, as well as a community police station.

Whether providing these services should be the role of the library or the state (i.e. the municipality or the public university) is not what I want to talk about here. Rather, I'm interested in the idea that libraries already provide a network of social services that operate in tandem with constituted state power.

The largest network of libraries is the system of public libraries, typically organized by municipality, but active in both provincial associations and consortia the cross provincial lines. They are already offering social services, whether that be internet hot spots for loan, outreach to the disadvantaged, prison literacy programmes, onsite social workers, and safe spaces for the homeless (in municipalities which have seen the massive closure of day shelters run by the government). They also employ a large, disciplined, and decentralized workforce.

Academic libraries exist in every province and large municipal area. They belong to their own consortia, but also in provincial associations and

consortia with public and special libraries. They too cross provincial lines, through national networks both at the library and the university level. They have connections with vast numbers of post-secondary students, as well as researchers in every discipline.

Special libraries provide connections with the professions and the government. Law libraries are implicated within the legal profession and the judiciary; health libraries with the medical profession; government libraries with all levels of government: municipal, provincial, and federal. Imagine presenting your library card to receive medical care.

What I am arguing is that libraries as a whole a) are already present in the lives of vast swathes of the Canadian population and b) are already structured to provide services to their constituents. As a result, libraries are well-placed as exactly the “already organized institution” on which Jameson contends dual power must be based.

There are two immediate objections to such an idea, however. On the one hand, the question of library neutrality itself. For libraries to provide the services required of the dual power institution, they must give up any pretence to neutrality. They must - just like Jameson’s Army - recognize the socialist content of what they are doing. Rather than serving their current function, that of maintaining the population in their positions within capitalist culture, they would have to insist on their function as a socialist service layer, as effecting what Jameson calls “cultural revolution” in antagonism to capitalist culture.

In order to do this, however, we require new ways of talking about libraries and our parent organizations, new commitments to principles that recognizes the gap between values on paper and values in practice. And I think we have to be very clear about our commitments and values in order to let people know what services we provide. First and foremost, this means standing up to our parent organizations when they insist on policies and

procedures that run counter to our commitments. This flies in face of much of our professional discourse, which centers around demonstrating and proving our value to those who fund us. But this in itself runs counter to our posited values: if we prove our value to the capitalist state, whether the university or the municipality, we must deny the value that we provide to our communities and our societies. This may seem impossible, this may seem hard to imagine, but that, in the end, is the role of utopian thinking.

I wrote the bulk of this talk before the results of the American election and the disturbing rise of open right-wing activity in Canada over the past week. So while still insisting upon the importance of utopian thinking and exposing the contradictions of capitalism (“heightening” them, as Lenin put it), I think that we now have a more imminent problem. The US and Canada have long been without a real, organized, left wing. Left-wing thought is restricted mainly to university classroom, the occasional trade union, and a few grass-roots organizations. I would argue that one of the reasons the left in Canada has died out is that we haven’t had a strong, open, organized right wing to fight against. The “rush to the centre” that killed any left-wing orientation within the NDP has been a hallmark of Canadian politics for many years. Even the conservatism of the Harper government stopped short of explicit right-wing demagoguery. I think this is changing. The rise of the far-right throughout Europe and the US indicates that an open right is coming to Canada sooner rather than later, and I think that libraries and library workers will have to decide what side they are on. As the state moves rightward in order to pander to far-right voters, lobbying, and intimidation, libraries will only become more and more complicit in far-right government policies. There is no such thing as neutrality. We have to be prepared to start fighting far-right tendencies wherever we see them: in our plans, in our policies, and in our procedures, but especially within the policies and procedures of our parent organizations. This is hard to ask: we are so afraid of being seen as obsolete or difficult, afraid that our funding will be cut and that we will cease to exist. I have only this response: under fascist

governments libraries as we know them will cease to exist anyway, and the best way to prove our relevance to the communities we serve is to fight for their interests, the interests of a collective and just society.