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Inside. . . .

- **SPECIAL SECTION:**
Implementing ALA's "Poor People's Policy":
Documents from and to Sanford Berman and the Task Force on Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty that he founded, calling on ALA, LC, librarians and citizens to help implement ALA's official position and public policy statement, "Library Services for the Poor". 13-25

No, the Poor Must *Not* Always Be Among Us

by Sanford Berman

former Head Cataloger at Hennepin County Library, Minnesota, and founder of the ALA/SRRT Task Force on Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty

Despite an undoubted economic “boom” and much-vaunted “prosperity,” one in five American children remains in poverty, food shelf and shelter use rises, a third of the workforce makes less than livable wages, and some 45 million people have no health insurance. So celebration of our collective “good times” seems a little premature.

Stunningly absent from major-party election rhetoric is an explicit commitment to genuinely help low-income persons by fighting to eliminate low incomes, to dismantle poverty itself, to really achieve a more equitable “playing field.” No citizen, no politician, can truly be neutral or passive about this, for within a context of inequity and injustice, neutrality and passivity invariably favor wealth and privilege, ensuring the continuing misery and hopelessness of the “less fortunate.”

There’s no mystery about what to do. Nearly every social critic and anti-poverty activist comes up with just about the same “laundry list” of needed initiatives and policies, among them:

- a much greater public investment in affordable housing (in Minnesota, 43% of renter households can’t afford the \$591 Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom unit)
- universal health care or national health insurance (perhaps based on the Canadian, Dutch, German or Scandinavian models)
- a higher—or living—minimum wage, guaranteeing that no working person stays below the poverty line (almost half of male workers in Minnesota earn too little to adequately support a family of four, while over 72% of women workers make less than what’s required to maintain a single-parent family of three)
- provision of child care, educational benefits, and transportation subsidies to welfare consumers (the recent “welfare repeal” act actually forced many poor women out of college or vocational schools)

- ample welfare payments for people who need them and a moratorium on heartless, destructive time limits and sanctions.

The real “trouble” with poor or homeless people isn’t mental illness or physical disability or drug use or personal irresponsibility. It’s that they don’t have enough money. Or a network to support them. Affluent people with mental illness, disabilities or addictions get taken care of. The big difference is bucks and readily available services. Thus the full challenge isn’t simply to furnish temporary, band-aid programs or goods to poor people. It’s also to treat them with the same dignity and respect as anyone else, and to remove such barriers of “institutional” classism as—for instance, in public libraries—fines (now levied strictly to generate revenue, not to get books back on time), fees (like bestseller rental schemes and video-borrowing charges that deny what ought to be a free service to anyone unable to pay for it), and unreasonable residence requirements for securing a library card. And ultimately the challenge is to work like hell to consign poverty itself to the dustbin.

Americans intent on “doing the right thing” might well emulate our Canadian neighbors, particularly the 160,000 individuals and 1,100 groups in Quebec who lately proposed legislation based on these three principles:

- The elimination of poverty is a priority
- Increasing the income of the poorest fifth of the population takes priority over increasing the income of the richest fifth
- People living in poverty and their organizations must be involved in the creation, implementation and evaluation of all future government initiatives.

Why not insist that every candidate, lawmaker and public servant embrace these sensible precepts - and act accordingly?

Some Questions and Thoughts Regarding ALA's "Poor People's Policy"

A Letter to the Executive Director
of the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services
of the American Library Association
by Sanford Berman

Karen Muller
Executive Director
ALCTS
American Library Association

January 24, 2000

Dear Karen,

Many thanks for sending me a copy of the final report of the SAC Task Force on Library of Congress Subject Heading Revisions Relating to the Poor People's Policy. I wish to commend Chair Ruth Bogan and her five associates for their thoughtful, and diligent work. And in the same spirit of collaboration and collegiality, here are a few comments, questions and suggestions regarding the report.

According to my notes, as resolution mover I had HOMELESS FAMILIES deleted from the original Midwinter text and two new items added: LIVING WAGE LAWS and STREET NEWS-PAPERS. This happened during an ALA Council meeting on June 29, 1999, in New Orleans. I subsequently submitted to the SAC Task Force extensive documentation to support establishment of the two proposed descriptors, including full authority- workups from the *HCL cataloging bulletin*, abundant usage-examples and several assignment candidates. I warmly recommend that the SAC Task Force consider making these two forms an addendum to its "Report on Proposed Headings."

Page 7: Agreed. Harvard—and other libraries—should, indeed, revamp "poor" variations to conform to the improved form; e.,g.,

Poor	becomes	Poor People
Rural Poor		Rural Poor People
Urban Poor		Urban Poor People
Church Work with the Poor		Church Work with Poor People
Legal Assistance to the Poor		Legal Assistance to Poor People
Poor Aged		Poor Aged People
Libraries and the Poor		Libraries and Poor People

Page 8: A cardinal reality in library catalogs is that many—for whatever reasons—do not provide direct cross-references to primary headings. In MARC jargon, they do not either input or display 450s. Given that widespread actuality, it becomes absolutely essential that primary descriptors (650s) appear in the most-likely-to-be-sought form. Otherwise, countless subject searches will fail, leading catalog users to mistakenly believe there are no materials on their desired topic. A construction like HOMELESS PERSONS—ASSAULTS AGAINST is truly "stilted" and artificial, not nearly as likely to be searched as VIOLENCE AGAINST HOMELESS

Letter to Karen Muller, continued:

PERSONS. The "solution" here seems to lie in transforming—ASSAULTS AGAINST forms into VIOLENCE AGAINST___ headings, of course making a 450 for the previously main term. The result will be that far more catalog users will "hit" relevant material—especially in cross-reference-bereft situations—than at present.

Page 12-13: Apparently overlooked in the deliberations over whether to ratify POOR, POOR PEOPLE, or perhaps LOW-INCOME PEOPLE is the question of self-definition or self-naming. What do poor people call themselves? An examination of the welfare rights and antipoverty press will show, I believe, a preference for direct terminology and no euphemisms. As merely a random example, "poor people" appears frequently (and prominently), on just one page of the June 1999 *Long Haul*, "End Legislated Poverty's Newspaper." It's also the favored term in the very title of the most recent professional volume on the subject: Karen Venturilla's *Poor People and Library Services* (McFarland, 1998). Finally, Rosalie Maggio, on page 316 of her *Talking about People: a Guide to Fair and Accurate Language* (Oryx, 1997) cautions:

Do not use as a noun ("the poor").

Pages 14-17: Yes, "Berman is saying, 'Go with the terminology people understand.'" Why? To facilitate first "hits" and ensure—for reasons already stated above—that this much more contemporary and familiar form avoids altogether failed searches in catalogs without adequate syndetics. The concern about "public and private initiatives" being wrongly conflated under the shortened term seems unwarranted, inasmuch as "welfare," is invariably understood to mean the "public" variety only. And that is certainly LC's understanding, as manifest in such form, as WELFARE REFORM and WELFARE FRAUD (rather than PUBLIC WELFARE REFORM and PUBLIC WELFARE FRAUD).

Page 18: Excellent recommendation. However, even more "authorities" have been cited in the *HCL Cataloging Bulletin* and many independently forwarded to the Task Force; e.g.,

Maggio, Rosalie. *Talking about people: a guide to fair and accurate language* (Oryx Press, 1997), p. 95.

Phythian, B. A. *A concise dictionary of new words*, (NTC Publishing Group, 1997), p. 41.

Page 19: The failure to make recommendations regarding CLASSISM IN... forms is disappointing. Every one of the glossed or parenthetical permutations had—over several years—been established at Hennepin County Library, reported fully in the *HCL cataloging bulletin*, and formally suggested to the Library of Congress through the Cooperative Cataloging Division under an arrangement developed by former Director for Cataloging Sarah Thomas. "Warrant" data, actual assignments, and complete authority workups could have been examined in the *Bulletin* and assignments alone determined from accessing the *HCL Catalog*. More broadly, I simply cannot comprehend why the *Bulletin* and *Catalog* were not consulted with respect to every proposed heading or change, particularly since I had publicly announced the HCL-provenance at ALA Council sessions and in the September 1999 *American Libraries* (p. 38).

Page 20: HCL inaugurated CORPORATE POWER in July 1982, noting *Political science thesaurus II* (1979), p. 72, as an "authority," and initially assigning it to *Attack on Corporate America: the corporate issues sourcebook* (1978) and Edward S. Herman's *Corporate Control, Corporate Power* (1981). In the ensuing 17 years, the *Bulletin* listed dozens more usage examples and assignments. The widely appreciated scope could be succinctly stated in a short pn:

Here are entered materials on the economic, political and social power of corporations.

Yes, Virginia, this *is* a subject. And an increasingly important one. In fact, much of the recent and continuing debate and furor over WTO, NAFTA and MIA is explicitly about "corporate power."

Page 21-22: Fine recommendation. But the scope isn't necessarily limited to "large companies." HCL's original pn is perhaps pithier and more accurate:

Here are entered materials on corporate tax deductions and government subsidies.

For the initial HCL treatment, including authorities, assignments public note, and cross references, see *HCL cataloging bulletin* November/December 1995, p. 6-7.

Letter to Karen Muller, continued:

Page 25: I have just confirmed with the local Emergency Food Shelf Network (612-925-6265) that "food shelves" (or "emergency food shelves" or "food pantries"), are distinct from "food banks." The "banks" solicit bulk donations from corporate & other sources which they then sell to the shelves, which function as distribution points, here providing a 3-5 day supply of nutritious food to persons in need. (Current price per pound charged by "banks" to "shelves": 14 cents. There are currently 55,000 hungry children in Minnesota alone and some 140,000 more at risk). I warmly recommend revising the Task Force recommendation to:

Establish FOOD SHELVES.

Page 26: Additional "hits" would have been found by searching the *HCL Catalog* and *Cataloging bulletin*.

Page 31: The recommended "see"-reference from "Mentally ill homeless persons" to the existing LCSH form, HOMELESS PERSONS—MENTAL HEALTH is potentially "blind," inasmuch as material found under the broader heading may or may not contain information on homeless, mentally ill persons. Further, much of the relevant literature deals unequivocally with homeless persons who *are* mentally ill, justifying the more specific and precise form. Additionally, the proposed construction then permits the employment of appropriate subheads under HOMELESS MENTALLY ILL PERSONS like— ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PSYCHOTHERAPY, MEDICAL CARE, etc. I warmly recommend changing the Task Force suggestion to:

Establish HOMELESS MENTALLY ILL PERSONS, perhaps with "see also" references from and to HOMELESS PERSONS—MENTAL HEALTH.

Page 35: HCL also employs such forms as INTERRACIAL FRIENDSHIP and INTERFAITH FRIENDSHIP. Because, as noted, the proposed heading (and its analogs) is often assigned to fiction, it becomes a useful device for making more digestible the citation sequences under a far broader form like FRIENDSHIP—FICTION. FRIENDSHIP—SOCIAL ASPECTS is much too broad to be helpful.

Page 37: The implied distinction between individual literary works and literary collections is

superficial and untenable. The 150-page anthology of short stories and the 150-page novel, if they both genuinely qualify as "nonclassist," merit the identical genre heading. Catalogers capable of determining the genre or theme of a collection can likewise determine the genre or theme of a single work. (Parenthetically, catalogs *are* "bibliographies." The critical issue is: how extensive and systematic should they be? Their potential is vast, virtually permitting one-stop searching.)

Page: 40: "Empowerment" as a concept and method is now inescapably established in popular and scholarly discourse alike. It deserves recognition as a free-floating subdivision, applicable to primary headings, for classes of people; e.g.,

Poor People—Empowerment
Women Workers—Empowerment
Indigenous People—Empowerment
Battered Women—Empowerment

With best wishes,

Sanford Berman

Former Head Cataloger
Hennepin County (Minnesota) Library

Founder/Former Chair
ALA/SRRT Task Force on Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty

4400 Morningside Road
Edina, MN 55416

cc: CPSO
Ruth Bogan

P.S. Kindly share, if convenient, with CCS and SAC Chairs, as well as the ALCTS Executive Committee.

ADDENDUM

• Page 23. It's unfortunate that the Task Force "did not see the relation of the heading ["Democratic socialism"] to the Poor People's Policy and the rest of the headings proposed." However, the American hero whose birthday we lately celebrated—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—*did* make the connection. As reported in a letter and article recently sent to Ruth Bogan, both published in the Twin Cities' *Star Tribune*, King concluded that "democratic socialism" might be the best way to eliminate poverty and reduce social inequality.

ALA/SRRT TASK FORCE ON HUNGER, HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY
Recommendations for Action in Implementing
ALA's "Library Services for the Poor" Resolution
(aka "Poor People's Policy"). April 2000

"The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons, and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults and families in America." (Poor People's Policy)

Actions for Citizens

1. Challenge public policy that adversely affects low-income people, such as punitive welfare reform, cutting tax credits, reducing food stamps, eliminating benefits to immigrants, limiting health care access, and criminalizing homeless persons (e.g. through laws against loitering, panhandling and camping).
2. Join local advocacy groups that work to promote resources and services for poor people.
3. Promote full, stable and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs in support of low-income services, and for pro-active library programs that reach beyond traditional service-sites to poor children, adults and families.
4. Promote an expanded federal low-income housing program, national health insurance, full employment policy, living minimum wage and welfare payments, affordable day care, and other programs likely to reduce, if not eliminate, poverty itself.

Actions for Library Professionals

Related to library services and policies:

1. Examine your library's mission statement. Who is supposed to be served? Are all people welcome. Are all people being served? What are the barriers to people using the library? What steps could be taken to eliminate these barriers?
2. Insure that people know how library policies are determined and are able to voice their concerns.
3. Evaluate library policies to ensure that they do not discriminate based on the ability to pay for access and/or service (e.g. video rental fees and bestseller rental programs).
4. Promote the removal of all barriers to library and information services, particularly fees and overdue charges, as well as homeless-excluding residence requirements.
5. Ensure the future success of all children by contributing to efforts that insure children know how to read and are encouraged to read.
6. Work with local literacy providers to publicize availability of Adult Basic Education classes, GED, and ESL to help adults improve their literacy skills.

Related to Staff Training:

1. Promote training to sensitize library staff to issues affecting poor people and to attitudinal and other barriers that hinder poor people's use of libraries.
2. Promote training and other opportunities for librarians, in effective techniques for generating public funding to upgrade library services to poor people.

Related to budgets and funding:

1. Promote the incorporation of low-income programs and services into regular library budgets in all types of libraries, rather than the tendency to support these projects solely with "soft money" like private or federal grants.

Recommendations for Action, continued:

2. Promote equity in funding adequate library services for poor people in terms of materials, facilities and equipment.
3. Promote supplemental support for library resources for and about low-income populations by urging local, state and federal governments, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.

Related to Outreach Services:

1. Ask local welfare consumer and anti-poverty organizations what issues they're working on and how the library can contribute to their work.
2. Promote the determination of output measures through the encouragement of community needs assessment, giving special emphasis to assessing the needs of low-income people and involving both anti-poverty advocates and poor people themselves in such assessments.
3. Have a special area of reports, brochures and newsletters of local organizations and agencies with addresses, contact names, and purpose of groups so that interested people can get involved.
4. Fund and support outreach services that address community needs such as literacy and read-aloud programs.
5. Promote networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations and advocacy groups in order to develop programs and services that effectively reach poor people.
6. Build partnerships with organizations in our community that serve low-income families. Tell those organizations what you have, how the library works, and update them on new materials and services.
7. Promote among library staff the collection of food and clothing donations, volunteering personal time to anti-poverty activities and contributing money to direct-aid organizations. Also, promote related efforts concerning minorities and women, since these groups are disproportionately represented among poor people.
8. Compile a database of local community organizations and make it part of your library's web page and/or online catalog, readily available to patrons who may need it.
9. Sponsor public events (such as forums, speakers, community discussions, presentations by local organizations) so people can understand issues affecting them, like taxes, child care options, corporate welfare, crime, school services, growing wealth disparities, housing and health policies, and fair trade.

Related to Public Awareness:

1. Promote increased public awareness—through programs, displays, bibliographies and publicity—of the importance of poverty-related library resources and services in all segments of society.
2. Promote direct representation of poor people and anti-poverty advocates through appointment to local boards and creation of local advisory committees on service to low-income people, such as appointments to include library-paid transportation and stipends.
3. Collect, display and make readily accessible current and up-to-date information on issues such as wealth distribution, child-care, welfare reform, living wage laws, single-payer health insurance, and affordable housing.
4. Promote the publication, production, purchase and ready accessibility of print and non-print materials that honestly address the issues of domestic and global poverty, hunger and homelessness; that deal with poor people in a respectful way; and that are of practical use to low-income patrons.

Related to Professional Association activities:

1. Read ALA's "Poor People's Policy" and think about how its recommendations may be implemented in the libraries where you work.
2. Distribute copies of ALA's "Poor People's Policy" to colleagues. Initiate a discussion of the Poor People's Policy at the libraries where you work, and get your colleagues thinking about and discussing ways it can be implemented.
3. Ask ALA's Washington Office to actively support legislative initiatives that would contribute to reducing, if not eliminating, poverty (e.g. living wage, more low-income housing, and universal health care).
4. Get involved in the ALA units working on the issues of library services to poor people, such as the Social Responsibilities Round Table's Task Force on Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty or the OLOS subcommittee on the "Poor People's Policy."
5. Document effective library services aimed at serving poor people and share information about these programs through ALA publications, conference sessions and electronic discussion lists, as well as with groups outside ALA.
6. Encourage library science programs to offer courses on services to both urban and rural poor people.
7. Ask all ALA units to report on past, present and future activities undertaken to implement the Poor People's Policy.

SPECIAL SECTION continued: Implementing ALA's "Poor People's Policy"

August 23, 2000

Beacher J. E. Wiggins
Director for Cataloging
Library of Congress
101 Independence Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20540-4300

Dear Beacher,

Many thanks for your June 22nd report on action taken as a result of my ALA Council resolution on "Subject Heading Revisions Relating to the Poor People's Policy." However, in an April 5th letter, you had promised to consider not only the SAC Task Force recommendations, but also my "responses...to various of them" (re-enclosed). Except for the welcome (if belated) establishment of CORPORATE POWER, it doesn't appear that my six-page comments were seriously considered at all.

Why, for instance--apart from unacceptable reasons of "historic preservation"--has POOR not been expanded to POOR PEOPLE (thus making it congruent with RICH PEOPLE)?

Why has FOOD SHELVES not been created as a term related to, yet distinct from, the existing FOOD BANKS?

Why has --EMPOWERMENT not been validated as a subdivision under groups or classes of persons?

Why have LIVING WAGE LAWS and STREET NEWSPAPERS not been established despite the wealth of usage and other documentation I have submitted? Likewise: INTERCLASS FRIENDSHIP? And DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM?

Why was "Corporate welfare" merely introduced as a see-reference to SUBSIDIES when not all "subsidies" (e.g., to persons or nonprofits) necessarily represent "corporate welfare"?

Why, why, why?

With best wishes,

Sanford Berman

4400 Morningside Road
Edina, MN 55416



September 12, 2000

Dear Sandy:

In response to your August 23 letter, I assumed that in sharing with you the actions that the Library of Congress had taken in response to your ALA Council resolution, that we had addressed issues raised in the resolution and in your additional comments. Just to make certain that we had seriously considered your comments and folded them into our deliberation, I have forwarded your letter to our Cataloging Policy and Support Office to review and respond to you accordingly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beacher J. Wiggins'.

Beacher J. Wiggins
Director for Cataloging

Sandy Berman
4400 Morningside Road
Edina, MN 55416



THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540-4305

CATALOGING POLICY AND SUPPORT OFFICE

October 4, 2000

Dear Mr. Berman,

I am writing to follow up on the specific subject heading questions in your letter to Beacher Wiggins of August 23, 2000, regarding the report of June 22, 2000, to Ms. Karen Muller, Executive Director of ALCTS, on the actions taken by the Library of Congress in response to the final report of the ALCTS Cataloging and Classification Section Subject Analysis Committee Task Force on Library of Congress Subject Heading Revision Relating to the Poor People's Policy (ALA Council Document 1999-2000 CD#4).

1. LC added a UF reference **Poor people** and a BT reference **Persons** to the existing subject heading **Poor**. Because the SAC Task Force did not arrive at a consensus and was divided on the question of whether to support the change of heading to "Poor people," it did not recommend changing the current heading in LCSH. LC's reasons for not changing the heading were originally stated in a letter of September 3, 1996, from Beacher Wiggins to Ms. Carol Barta, SSRT Action Council Secretary, Social Responsibilities Round Table, ALA, and reiterated in a statement prepared for the Subject Analysis Committee in January 1999 and distributed as SAC document SAC 99/MID 20. A copy of that statement is enclosed.

2. LC has the staff resources to create new subject headings only as they are needed in cataloging items being added to its own collections. A mechanism exists for other libraries to submit proposals to establish headings through the Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO). LC would consider a SACO proposal to establish a heading for "Food shelves" separate from the existing heading **Food banks**.

3. The SAC Task Force considered a proposed subject heading "Poor people-Empowerment" and recommended instead the use of existing headings. Your letter asked why has "-Empowerment" not been validated as a subdivision under classes of persons. In LCSH, subject heading concepts are coordinated in various ways and not always through the use of free-floating subdivisions. In some cases, it is LC cataloging policy to double a heading for a general concept with specific headings. For example, LCSH has the general heading **Employee empowerment**, and to a work on the empowerment of a specific group of employees, LC would assign the general heading in conjunction with a specific heading that represents the group of employees. In situations where a decision to use a free-floating subdivision is made, it is usually necessary to establish a general heading for a concept before the corresponding subdivision is authorized for use with a specific category of headings. In this case, we are not sure that a general free-floating subdivision used under classes of persons is the best solution in LCSH. Through the SACO program, LC would consider a proposal

Mr. Sanford Berman

2

October 4, 2000

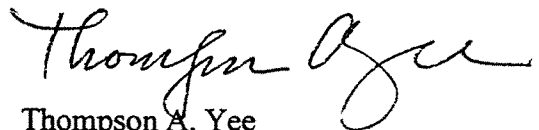
to establish a general heading for the concept of empowerment or a specific heading for the empowerment of poor persons.

4. Heading proposals for "Living wage laws" and "Street newspapers" were not part of the document forwarded to the SAC Task Force for its consideration. Nevertheless, on its own, LC established a new heading, **Living wage movement**, in December 1999. The SAC Task Force considered but did not recommend establishing a heading "Interclass friendship." Proposals to establish headings for "Street newspapers" and "Democratic socialism" would be considered through the SACO program.

5. As stated in my letter of January 27, 1999, "we have determined that 'corporate welfare' is a somewhat vague and ill-defined term that appears to be used more often to express a political point of view than to designate an actual subject." Since that letter, the UFs Corporate welfare and Welfare, Corporate were added to the existing heading **Subsidies**. That heading has the scope note: "Here are entered works on financial or other aid given, without equivalent recompense, by governments or governmental agencies to private enterprises." Citations in which the terms "corporate welfare" and "subsidies" or "subsidize" were used interchangeably were added as "Sources Found" in 670 fields of the authority record for **Subsidies**.

Thank you for you interest in Library of Congress Subject Headings.

Sincerely,



Thompson A. Yee
Acting Chief

Enclosure

Mr. Sanford Berman
4400 Morningside Road
Edina, MN 55416

cc: B. Wiggins

January 1999
SAC 99 M1020

**Library of Congress response to the
"Resolution on Headings Relating to Class and Poverty"**

Changing the headings Public welfare, Public welfare administration, and Poor.

Many of the nation's libraries have expressed to the Library of Congress their concern about the costs of bibliographic file maintenance when the Library of Congress makes major changes in subject headings, and have urged us, in allocating our limited staff resources, to give higher priority to the production of new cataloging records than to making subject heading changes. In its effort to respond to these concerns, the Library takes a somewhat cautious approach to making major subject heading changes. The policy is to make major changes of this type only in situations where the current heading is seriously deficient, and where the benefits of changing would clearly outweigh the costs. To change the headings **Public welfare** and **Poor** would require changing more than one hundred twenty authority records and more than eleven thousand five hundred bibliographic records in the Library of Congress database alone. The Library is reluctant to undertake changes of this magnitude without a compelling reason to do so.

The word "welfare," in the sense of public assistance, is essentially a shortened form of the fuller phrase "public welfare." The fuller phrase seems preferable since it is self-explanatory and can stand alone, whereas the shorter form is ambiguous. Since the definition of the word "welfare" as public assistance is actually a secondary or tertiary definition in most dictionaries rather than the primary definition, the heading **Welfare** would not be acceptable in a general subject headings list such as *Library of Congress Subject Headings*. If the heading were to be changed, it would be necessary to add a parenthetical qualifier and/or a scope note to clarify its meaning, resulting in a heading such as **Welfare (Public assistance)**. There does not seem to be any benefit that would result from changing the heading to that form nor does there seem to be any clear evidence that the term "public welfare" is antiquated or insensitive. It is a very commonly used term, as reflected in names of corporate bodies in the Library of Congress name authority file, as well as in titles in recent bibliographic records.

The Library also feels that the heading **Poor** is acceptable in its present form, since it is used only to refer to the poor considered in the collective sense as a social or economic group, not to refer to individual poor people. Current American dictionaries define "poor" in that sense as a noun, and give no indication that this usage is considered to be antiquated or insensitive. Since changing the heading to the form **Poor people** would provide no enhanced access to the topic, there seems to be little or no benefit to be gained in undertaking an expensive change of this type.

Establishing additional headings related to poverty, hunger, homelessness, and social policy. The Library of Congress has the staff resources to create new subject headings only as they are needed in cataloging items being added to our own collections. However, a mechanism exists, in the form of the subject authority cooperative program administered by the Cooperative Cataloging Team of the Regional and Cooperative Cataloging Division, for other libraries to submit proposals to establish headings that have not yet been created by the Library of Congress. Libraries that wish to participate in the enrichment of *Library of Congress Subject Headings* in this way may contact the Cooperative Cataloging Team for information on how to submit proposals for new headings.

The "Struggle to Bring More Humanity, Contemporaneity and Ease of Use" to LC Subject Headings Has Far to Go

*quoting Bruce Jensen, page 11

Sanford Berman
4400 Morningside Road
Edina, MN 55416

December 12, 2000

Dear Mr. Berman,

I am writing to supply you with a status report on the list of subject heading queries and suggestions that you sent to me on August 10, 2000 and October 10, 2000.

Street newspapers: LC has the staff resources to create new subject headings only as they are needed in cataloging items being added to its own collections. Other libraries are welcome to submit proposals to establish headings through the Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO).

Living wage laws: LC established the subject heading **Living wage movement** at the end of 1999. Legal materials are entered under the subject heading **Minimum wage—Law and legislation**.

West Papua (replacing Irian Jaya): As a federal government agency, LC follows usage authorized by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) for names of jurisdictions. The current name heading is **Irian Jaya (Indonesia)** with a reference from "West Papua (Indonesia)." If and when BGN authorizes a change of name, LC will change the name heading.

Seniors (replacing Aged): LC takes a cautious approach to making major subject heading changes. We are currently dealing with bibliographic file maintenance following the change of "Afro-Americans" to **African Americans** and over 600 subject headings that included the adjectival qualifier "Afro-American" to **African American....** If a decision were made to change the subject heading Aged, LC would investigate what an appropriate replacement heading would be at that time.

Roma (replacing Gypsies): LC has made the decision to change the current heading **Gypsies** to "Romanies." The change will take place next year.

Soca music: LC has the staff resources to create new subject headings only as they are needed in cataloging items being added to its own collections. Other libraries are welcome to submit proposals to establish headings through the Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO).

Conjoined twins (replacing Siamese twins): The previous heading "Siamese twins" was revised to **Conjoined twins** on Weekly List 00-40.

Thank you for your interest in Library of Congress Subject Headings.

Sincerely,

Thompson A. Yee
Acting Chief
Cataloging Policy and Support Office
The Library of Congress

A Letter to the Board of Supervisors of the San Francisco Public Library, Opposing Fines and Fees

by Sanford Berman

March 13, 2001

Board of Supervisors
City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton Goodlett Jr. Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY FINES
AND FEES

Dear Supervisors,

My 40 years as a professional librarian—in California, Washington, D.C., Germany, Zambia, Uganda, and Minnesota—have been dedicated to making libraries more accessible, accountable, relevant and responsive. Because of those concerns, I urge you to reject the SFPL administration's plan to contract with Unique Management Services for the recovery of overdue library materials, which would involve imposition of new fees.

Inasmuch as SFPL has *not* pursued less draconian and expensive methods for material-recovery like more frequent mail notices and periodic amnesties, the "problem" seems ill-defined and perhaps artificial. The UMS "solution" thus appears at once extreme and probably unwarranted. (Indeed, relatively few of the thousands of library systems in America have resorted to such outsourcing of a central library function like collection management.)

If the genuine objective is to get materials back on the shelves, fines and fees are not the best means to do it. In fact, shocking as it may sound, fines are no longer (if they ever were) collected to instill responsibility among borrowers or to retrieve materials. They are primarily levied to make money. They have become a significant "revenue stream." In terms of materials return, fines doubtless *promote* loss when charges accumulated by borrowers exceed their ability to pay. For reasons alike of embarrassment and economics, they're most likely to keep the material and never visit the library again. Because of

the "class" or income-level aspect of fines and fees—that is, their disproportionately adverse impact on poor people—at least three American Library Association policies or standards proscribe fines and fees. The occasion of this current discussion about outsourcing overdues-retrieval might be a good time to consider broader issues of circulation policy fairness and utility, as well as the touted "virtues" of outsourcing basic library operations. (Several enclosures directly address these matters.)

At the very least, additional overdue notices and occasional amnesties should be tried for a minimum of one to two years before contemplating something like the proposed UMS contract, which—apart from other possible effects—would unquestionably undermine staff security and morale, and create a public image of the library as distinctly user-*un*friendly and punitive.

With best wishes,

Sanford Berman

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Winner:
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