

Summary



Right-Wing Publishers and their Products / Should Books from Rightist Publishers Be Included in Library Collections? (Jörg Sundermeier)
(pp. 331 – 333)

Alongside the fear of foreign cultures, talk of »foreign infiltration« or »ethnic inversion«, an increasing number of educated citizens who have become bored with democracy and are in search of a chivalrous cause by which to prove themselves in battle, find honour, serve the fatherland and show manliness. Many of them are represented by works in nearly all libraries. In many places there are growing complaints that there is not enough rightist literature in the libraries. Complaints have also been quite sharp because some of the products of these publishing houses have even made the bestseller lists.

For several months now Germany has been engaged in a debate over whether and how one should engage right-wingers in a discourse. Efforts should be made, but one must also be prepared for the spokespeople of these various movements and organizations – which are sometimes more, sometimes less radically right-wing – to refuse to engage in a dialogue. Instead they are only interested in exhibiting their views, not in discussing them.

Many booksellers, meanwhile, have reported that older men (or, less often, women) have entered their stores and inquired about the products of right-wing publishers and asked whether they are in stock. Should the bookseller give a negative answer, the inquirer will either express great regret – or a suspicion that censorship is at play; it will be insinuated that the bookseller harbours »anti-German sentiments« and the threat of a boycott may even be voiced. And yet the vast majority of businesses do not withhold these books from readers and would immediately order them without comment. However, it is obvious that these special customers are not actually interested in purchasing a particular title, but rather in seeing a certain type of political tendency represented in a bookstore's assortment of titles.

A Political View of Science / New BuB Series – Part 1: The Scientific Establishment and the University (Haïke Meinhardt)
(pp. 348 – 351)

Science, or more precisely, the national scientific establishment as one of the largest functional systems within the German society, has experienced over the past two decades a period of turbulence following a long period of stability. On the one hand the dynamics of this shift can be traced to major transformational processes which have affected the entire society, including the world of science, through the determining factors of globalization, digitalization and technologization. These have helped modify the procedures and methods of producing knowledge, while changing and accelerating the nature of scientific communication. Within the context of this transformation there arise even further catchwords such as European harmonization and internationalization, performance-based allocation of resources and assessment procedures, evaluation and accreditation, excellence and innovation. These, too, are indicators of a process of change.

In the new BuB series Haïke Meinhardt examines these changes and attempts to draft an overall picture of the transformations taking place and the challenges for the scientific system that result from them. In the first articles she will present the basic structures and actors of the scientific establishment as well as the demands and challenges which are being faced in the individual sectors. Further articles will deal with the institutionalized system of scientific policy, the fundamental agendas for promoting science in recent years, and the central ideas which determine current governmental policies – always observed, of course, with a view toward their respective impacts on libraries.

Traces of 1968 / How the Ideas of the 1968 Generation Entered Librarianship (Birgit Dankert)
(pp. 352 – 357)

Anyone entering the Federal Republic of Germany's public service system, as our contributor Birgit Dankert did in 1971, became subject, as of February 1972, to an investigation into one's loyalty to the constitution or counter-constitutional activities conducted by the Federal Office of Constitutional Protection. The so-called »Radikalenerlass«, a government directive issued by the CDU/SPD coalition government, was a reaction to terrorist activities of Germany's Red Army Faction and the criminal radicalization which came out of the student protest movement that arose in the middle of the 1960s in many countries in Europe, in the USA and in South America. For those involved it is difficult to decide whether the West German student movement, collectively known as the »1968ers«, was part of a larger political revolt or a short but intensive epoch of long-overdue social change. And this indeterminacy also applies to the 1968s in West German libraries.

Whether as recent graduates of library school or as staff members, those protesting against the library establishment in 1968-1969 spoke out just as library policies were re-gaining a foothold following a major setback. A government study issued in 1964 had both defined the municipal public library as an enterprise and a system for providing information and established benchmarks for personnel and budgets. The study was also seen by many as a conceptual program. But municipalities – ostensibly due to the recession of 1966-67 – did not follow its lead. While waiting for positive political reaction, even minor atmospheric disturbances were felt to be protests against indisputable personal qualifications, integrity and performance. At the annual librarians' conference in 1970 in Wiesbaden, these factors escalated into a highly politicized conflict along generational lines.

Translated by Martha Baker