

# Foreword

Two decades and a bit ago, as president of Scarecrow Press, I became, through luck and friendship, the proud publisher of *Prejudices and Antipathies*, a small volume bound with unsubtle significance in black, with white lettering. The history of this earthquake of a book, however, began with another publisher, and continues, happily, into the nineties with yet another: one who in a way completes the circle, having been there in Metuchen, N.J., as a member of the Scarecrow family when the Berman book first appeared in 1971.

The real beginning (as my now rather faulty memory has it) was a letter from Sandy Berman which appeared in *Library Journal* in February 1969, just a few months before the end of my editorship of *Lj*. Titled "Chauvinistic headings," the letter reported Berman's conclusion, after a few weeks of using the LC subject-heading list at the University of Zambia Library, that what he had "long suspected" had "now been disgustingly confirmed: Western chauvinism permeates the scheme."

There followed more Berman letters in *Lj* and lesser sources, and gradually subject headings began to emerge as a hot new topic, particularly among the socially conscious who had been making noise in our profession for a number of years by the late sixties. But others, too, began to be aware of a disturbing rumble in the bowels of the normally quiet body of the cataloging world. The Library of Congress of course, but surprisingly also . . . ALA.

An enterprising editor in the seldom enterprising publishing department of the American Library Association had his ear to the

ground and detected this swell of interest in what surely had not formerly been considered one of the world's most exciting documents, the LC Subject Headings.

Sensing the passion in this new voice in the pages of library literature, the ALA editor dashed off a note to Berman asking him if he'd be interested in developing his thoughts on this curious subject to book length.

The young man at East Huron Street, where things rarely move with the speed of light, must have been shocked. He not only received an enthusiastic response, but in less time than most people would take to develop a sketchy outline there arrived a complete, book-length manuscript. He had his first Berman lesson: here was a man not just of words, but of action.

In the months that followed the tone of the correspondence between Chicago and Africa began to change. Chicago's enthusiasm began to drift into reservations, doubts, then suggested changes, and finally, proposed cuts and deletions. Bureaucracy, with its customary jitters when faced with the new and radical, appeared to be trying to suffocate Berman's baby.

Sandy would have none of it; they could throw out the bathwater, but the baby he wanted back. The manuscript headed for the tropics.

Berman, who must rank high among the world's most energetic correspondents, was at the time in touch with Fay Blake, then on another of her many sojourns abroad, this time in London. Sandy asked her if she knew of a publisher he might be able to trust to publish his manuscript without emaciating it and without the kind of runaround he had just experienced. My good friend Fay said, "Send it to Eric at Scarecrow," a testimonial for which I am ever grateful.

There was, as I remember, only one moment of unease during the correspondence between Sandy and me that followed my joyous acknowledgment of the receipt of *P & A*. It was when I told him that while I had no wish to excise one wonderful word, I wanted to "reorganize" his manuscript. He wanted details, understandably, which I tried to provide, and we agreed that Scarecrow would not proceed until he had approved this latest invasion.

The reason for my proposal was physical, logistical perhaps. You will note as you read this volume that Berman's *text* on each of the subject headings he discusses is very concise and taut as a violin string. But he reinforces his case with a veritable fusillade of notes, drawn from the incredible range of his reading and research. When I received the manuscript these notes were sprinkled throughout the lean text, smothering, almost burying it.

The operation to separate these octopus-like limbs from the body was conducted first with scissors, until the manuscript had been reduced to hundreds of narrow slips of paper, and then with stapler to put these remnants, like Humpty Dumpty, back together again.

I haven't checked the *Guinness Book of Records* but I believe I may be the first person to have developed tennis elbow from editing a manuscript.

A word further about those notes. If you are at all like me you do not swell with ardor at the sight of a footnote. You may, indeed, regard these things as a damn nuisance, a distraction. Prepare for something different within these covers. Good as Berman's text is, it is the notes in this volume that give the book its unique fascination—and its extra zing. Boxers talk about the old one-two. The notes here are the two. Don't miss 'em.

And now Sandy Berman's resounding seminal work is elevated to a new status as a paperback, to be read, one hopes, by many more than have already reveled in the hardbound version. As I browse through its pages once more after all these years, I am amazed to realize how far Sandy has brought us—and cataloging, and LC.

Among all the wonderful quotations that enliven these pages there is one, it seems to me, that speaks of Berman himself. It is the moving Bertolt Brecht quotation which nestles between Confucius and Sidney Jackson at the beginning of the book.

For Berman, indeed, with the intentness of *his* studies and the elation of *his* knowledge, has made the experience of struggle the property of us all. Justice is clearly *his* passion, and one must hope that he so transforms it for all of us. This warm, quiet man has been, during the twenty-odd years I've known him, our leading missionary, revolutionary, irritant, conscience and inspiration. His

is one of the great voices among us, and our libraries and our profession are the better for his wisdom and his caring passion. It is a great personal joy to be given this opportunity to welcome his *Prejudices and Antipathies* back into circulation.

Eric Moon

1993