

December 15, 2003

Dr. Andrea Mehrlander  
Executive Director  
Checkpoint Charlie Foundation  
Wolfensteindamm 9  
12165 Berlin  
GERMANY

Dear Dr. Mehrlander:

I am writing to thank you and the Stiftung Checkpoint Charlie for the opportunity to participate in the study tour of German libraries this past October. It was interesting and productive beyond expectation. The institutions which we visited provided insight into the enormously rich and varied collections which German libraries and museums have amassed over centuries, and which are still being energetically tended for the benefit of future generations. Despite incredibly complicated and challenging historical circumstances (wars, political issues, etc.), these wonderful collections are clearly valued and are a great resource for scholarship the world over.

We were impressed by many things: the welcoming spirit and serious, thoughtful presentations which our hosts provided in every venue; the richness and depth of the collections; the sophisticated document delivery offered by many of the libraries we visited (especially the university libraries); the excellent physical condition and cleanliness of the public, storage and office spaces; and the energy and dedication invested in using technology.

The increasing availability of bibliographical information in electronic form is making these rich collections available for all the world to know about and use. Everyone we met was enthusiastic about future projects and interested in collaboration and sharing resources. As a result of contacts made at the IFLA conference in Berlin in August of 2003, and encouragement from participants in the study tour, some libraries in Germany are now interested in contributing information about their auction/sale catalog holdings to an auction/sale catalog database (SCIPIO). Exposure to the resources of German libraries and knowledge of existing bibliographic networks provides libraries on both sides of the Atlantic the opportunity to share resources for the sake of scholarship. I have already used this new knowledge to search for (and find!) obscure publications which are needed by curators at The Metropolitan Museum of Art for their research.

Let me close by saying that Evelin Morgenstern was a decided asset as a guide and companion on this tour. Her knowledge of the "library landscape" is prodigious

and her contacts helpful. The accommodations were entirely satisfactory; the many logistical details were wonderfully worked out and the pace of the trip was perfect, with the right balance between official visits, local tours and (some) free time.

I hope that the Stiftung Checkpoint Charlie will be able to fund more such worthwhile projects in the future, and I cannot overemphasize how privileged I am to have been able to benefit from this undertaking.

With gratitude and sincere best wishes,

Linda Seckelson  
Head of Reader Services  
Thomas J. Watson Library