

workforce. This gender divide continued in telephone operations, turning attention from the speedy hands to the tactful voices of the predominantly female operators.

Sexual exploits and misconduct emerge in Hindmarch-Watson's chapters on telegraph boy messengers. London's telegraph boys were ubiquitous and anonymous, both seen and unseen, as they delivered messages across the metropolis. Sexual scandals involving telegraph boys and established men across the capital led administrators to tighten controls and expectations for these young workers. Their dress and comportment were topics of great concern and reform for administrators, who attempted to mold them through fitness regimes. Indeed, administrators controlled their paths to permanent government positions as adults by requiring military service along the way. These boys in uniform represented the telecommunications systems for which they worked and sexual scandals fed into administrative anxieties about respectability, of the workers and of the system itself.

Just as telecommunications infrastructures were symbols of empire, so too were they targets for rebellion. In the epilogue, Hindmarch-Watson provides examples of how breaking telecommunications circuits and attempts to wrest control of central offices were tactics employed by groups such as suffragists, Irish nationals, and labor organizers. Telecommunications infrastructures supported London's growth and the activities of the British Empire itself in broadening communications networks and controls. They also enabled communications between rebel groups and proved ready targets for disruption. Hindmarch-Watson shares evidence of telecommunications workers both fomenting and undermining these defiant acts.

Serving a Wired World juxtaposes in colorful ways the varied tensions of the period: between administrators and workers, privacy and mediation, female and male employees, good boys and bad ones, order and rebellion. How did people of the era perceive new technologies like telegraphy? How did this new system make space for a workforce that included not only men, but women and boys in its ranks? How did administrators take advantage of a feminized workforce, positioning some laborers against others and keeping salaries in check? Hindmarch-Watson takes us on a tour of these entangled questions in the context of 19th-century London telecommunications. Today's information workers may recognize some of these tensions, particularly in how library labor is both integral and invisibilized in library operations and how administrative decisions inform public discourse on the labor of information. —Shannon K. Supple, *Smith College*

Meggan Press. *Get the Job: Academic Library Hiring for the New Librarian.* Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2020. 158p. Paper, \$44.00 (ISBN 978-0-8389-4840-8).



In *Get the Job: Academic Library Hiring for the New Librarian*, Meggan Press, the Undergraduate Education Librarian at Indiana University–Bloomington, has prepared a guidebook to the hiring process of the “strange and wonderful beast” (1) called academia. This slim volume covers everything from tips for deciding whether graduate school in library science is right for you to dealing with imposter syndrome as a new academic librarian. In between, Press, part Dante’s Virgil and part Emily Post, both demystifies the peculiar traditions and rules that govern the academic job search and instructs readers in the etiquette that the system expects.

The book’s chapters fall naturally into four sections (though

they're not labeled as such) that mirror a job search. The first section prepares job seekers for the hunt. In the second section, readers follow Press from analyzing a job ad through completing the written portion of the application. The third section covers the phone and in-person interviews. The final chapters address everything that could happen after you're offered the job. Overall, the tone is lighthearted and approachable, expecting readers to share an enthusiasm for the field and a whatever-it-takes determination to scale the walls of the ivory tower.

But in addition to their own enthusiasm, determination, and Press's good advice, freshly minted MLS-holders looking for academic library jobs in an economy rocked by the coronavirus pandemic will also need a good dose of luck. It is Press's bad fortune to have written a guide that largely succeeds in making the job-seeking process sound manageable and normal, only to have it published in times that are anything but. Nevertheless, MLS students and recent graduates should take the opportunity to let Press show them behind the curtain, taking what works and ignoring the occasional platitude ("Do your research," 127, for example).

Readers might find that the book begins much earlier than expected: with the choice of whether or not to attend graduate school for library science. Given the professional orientation of the degree (and the cost of obtaining it), Press wisely recommends and explains job shadowing to prospective students (9). Current library science students are advised to prepare for the job market through extensive research, both passive and active—for example, reading job ads regularly, both as a guide to choosing coursework and as a way to ground school-ish classroom experiences (14). For some, all this advice will feel too little, too late.

But just about everyone, at any stage in the job search, can find something to improve upon in Press's lengthy, granular guidance on preparation: how to write CVs (30), audit your digital presence (27), and organize a large-scale search (37). Most of this advice is not uncommon and could probably be cobbled together by an intrepid seeker attending numerous workshops, seminars, Q&As, forums, and roundtables, but the value proposition here is that Press has collected it all in one place.

Press's single best idea of the book is to include a chapter called "Topics in Higher Education," intended to contextualize the job search within academia as an institution (40). Shared governance, tenure, and faculty versus staff designations—each of which "has a light side and a dark side" (40)—are all examined so that a novice may begin to understand "why academic hiring is the way it is" (40). This is the sort of information a job-seeker might not even know to ask about, and Press has done readers a great favor in providing the basics here.

The second and third sections of the book address the written application and the interviews, respectively. Press shares a method for analyzing and annotating a job ad that helps applicants determine whether or not they're "qualified" and explains how to turn stock phrases from the job ad into meaningful tools for writing a cover letter, rather than glazing over them (see pages 51, 55). Beyond examining the different purposes of a CV and a cover letter, Press also alerts readers to what employers want if they ask for a writing sample or a teaching philosophy, which are less well-known but occasionally required of academic librarian positions (64). The gem of the section on written materials is a chapter called "Putting It in Practice," where Press annotates a sample job ad and relates it to her own CV from when she was a new job-seeker in order to write a cover letter.

When the book finally reaches the phone interview, the presentation, and the full-day interview, the reader knows what to expect: Press offers clear, big-picture explanations of the processes from the point of view of the hiring party ("The search committee, and the

faculty at large, are looking to the presentation to show them how you think, how you work, and how you plan," 96). These revelations are balanced with an eye toward practical details, such as suggestions for what to pack for the full-day interview and which critical documents you should bring multiple hard copies of (109). The final chapters race through what happens after you get an offer (119), tease out major themes of the book (127), and offer strategies for adjusting to the new role (131).

Occasionally throughout the book, Press presses pause on the how-to spirit of the text to acknowledge the ways that the process she's describing perpetuates inequalities, as with the expectation that finalists for the job can and will pay the costs of their visits up front until reimbursed (15). Other times, the real fact that the applicant and the institution are not on equal footing is recast as a "mindset" problem that the applicant must learn to overcome in order to succeed, as when Press writes that "[m]any people ... create a tense environment for themselves where it becomes difficult to let go of their desire or need for a job" (108). In another moment, Press goes even further in obscuring the real relationship between parties, telling the reader that "[y]ou are hiring them to be your employer just as much as they are hiring you to be your employee" (26). In fairness, this reminder seems to be meant to give the reader a feeling of empowerment, and indeed the entire point of the book is to clear the cloistered air of academic library hiring. All of which make some absences from this guidebook that much more conspicuous.

It's surprising that the book doesn't offer any advice specific to those who are already employed in an academic library as part-timers who are looking for a full-time position. Nor does the book address in any depth those who are seeking academic librarianship as a second career. True, much of the advice can be translated into either of those situations, but the lack of special attention is a drawback. Therefore, readers in such situations might struggle against feeling a bit jaded at times. But at its best, *Get a Job* is a readable how-to manual that can be referred to again and again as that first job search unfolds. —Max Thorn, *Queens College, City University of New York*

Dean Spade. *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity during This Crisis (and the Next)*. London: Verso, 2020. 128p. Paper, \$14.95 (ISBN 978-1-8397-6212-3).

Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next) by Dean Spade is about creating and maintaining relationships, organizations, and projects that help people survive in crises, processes that together are known as "mutual aid." Mutual aid helps people refuse to be disposed of and refuse to dispose of one another. In doing so, it offers the means to develop a better analysis of the conditions of people's lives and builds capacity for sustained action to improve those conditions. Tending to one another through mutual aid opens doors to other forms of organizing. Among library workers, this book may be most useful to those who are fighting for better conditions in both workplaces and communities.¹ Sustaining mutual aid, Spade argues, is a twofold matter. First, it involves a sense of being in struggle with: understanding one's survival and liberation as being tied to others' survival and liberation. Second, mutual aid expands the landscape of struggle by showing that empty stomachs, living unhoused, precarious and invisible labor, and institutionalization (in prisons, long-term care, and "digital poorhouses"²) are each political and therefore sites of struggle.

