

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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For immediate release

Chicago, February 9 -- Nation-wide integration of libraries was advocated in a statement adopted by the American Library Association at its annual midwinter meeting last week.

With more than 800 of the nation's leading librarians on hand, including representatives of southern states, the Association approved a new statement for inclusion in its existing "Library Bill of Rights" and clarified and reaffirmed a stand it had made in various other statements since 1938.

The new statement stipulated:

"The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his race, religion, national origins or political views."

The committee recommendations calling for approval of the statement was placed before the Council, governing body of the Association, by Herman H. Fussler, director of the University of Chicago Library and chairman of the ALA Committee on Civil Liberties.

The committee, appointed on May 17, 1960, was asked to "recommend an ALA policy statement on the civil rights of individuals to have access to libraries and the resources contained therein."

The committee statement was drafted to be simple, unambiguous, and relatively timeless and not specifically directed at the current integration situation, according to Fussler.

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Add 1. Civil Liberties

In his presentation to the Council, Fussler said:

"The committee is well aware that in the present tense situation in some parts of the country, the adoption of almost any kind of statement in respect to civil rights may seem offensive or unnecessary to some, while it may seem overdue to others. Furthermore there are those who sincerely believe that the adoption of such a statement may adversely affect the access to libraries on the part of the very persons whose interests the policy statement seeks to protect. The committee believes these risks, whatever they may be, must be accepted by the Association."

In reaffirming the Association's stand, the committee followed a path the Association had been taking since 1938 when it issued a non-discrimination policy statement concerned with its meetings and conferences.

"In all rooms and halls assigned to the American Library Association hereafter for use in connection with its conference or otherwise under its control, all members shall be admitted upon terms of full equality," the statement said.

In 1948, in the original "Library Bill of Rights," ALA held that selection of materials in libraries should be made "for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of a community. In no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer."

Members of the Committee on Civil Liberties, besides Fussler, were: Essae M. Culver, Librarian of the Louisiana State Library; Jack Dalton, dean of the School of Library Service, Columbia University; Dan Lacy, managing director, American Book Publishers Council; Archie L. McNeal, director of the University of Miami Library; Lucile M. Morsch, deputy chief assistant librarian, Library of Congress; and Ralph Ulveling, director, Detroit Public Library.