

ALA-Committees-International
Relations-Minutes

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
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AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting, Sunday, June 29, 1980, 4:30-5:50 p.m., Waldorf Astoria Hotel, Empire Room, New York City

U. S. INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS OF IFLA DISCUSSION MEETING

Present: Lester Asheim (University of North Carolina School of Library Science); Alice Ball (Universal Serials & Book Exchange, Inc.); Dena Epstein (University of Chicago); Josephine Fang (Simmons College); Jane Franck (Columbia University); Richard Gardner (UCLA Graduate School of Library and Information Science); Julian Green (Harvard University); Melinda Greenblatt (Information Center on Children's Cultures); Warren J. Haas (Council on Library Resources); Donald Hausrath (International Communication Agency); Vivian Hewitt (Special Libraries Association); Doralyn Hickey (North Texas State University); Marcia Jebb (Cornell University); Edward Kazlauskas (USC School of Library Science); Agota Kuperman (International Communication Agency); John G. Lorenz (Consultant); Ann J. Martin (International Communication Agency); Noelene P. Martin (Pennsylvania State University); Jane Moore (Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York); Elisabeth Nebehay (United Nations Library); Hans Panofsky (Northwestern University); Mina Pease (Association of International Libraries); Roscoe Rouse (Oklahoma State University); Rodney Swartz (Washington State Library); Joe Treyz (University of Wisconsin); Warren Tsuneishi (Library of Congress); Sarah K. Vann (Association of American Library Schools); Allen B. Veaner (University of California-Santa Barbara); William Welsh (Library of Congress); Jean Lowrie, Chair (Western Michigan University).

Staff: Jane Wilson, International Relations Officer
Kathy Lucisano, student staff

- I. The meeting was called to order by the IRC Chair, Jean Lowrie.
- II. Lowrie, an IFLA Executive Board member, reported on her attendance at the Spring IFLA Board meeting in The Hague. The Program Management Committee (PMC), under the chairmanship of Foster Mohrhardt, has moved to organize the professional activities of IFLA and has recommended a single unified budget as well as a consolidated method of soliciting program funds.

Morris Line (UAP) announced that a UNESCO/IFLA International Congress on UAP (Universal Availability of Publications) will be held May 3-7, 1982 at UNESCO House in Paris. It will be followed by a post-conference seminar to consider implementation of the recommendations of the Congress. UPA is also conducting two new studies on Commercial Book Supply and Depository Planning. An Advisory Committee for the UAP is to be developed. An international seminar on document supply will be held at Boston Spa in late 1980 and there is also to be discussion on document delivery in the European community.

Dorothy Anderson (UBC) reported on the International MARC Network Study Steering Committee. The IFLA Executive Board authorized Hans Peter-Geh and the IFLA Secretary-General to conduct negotiations in order to set up the IFLA International MARC Office in Frankfurt.

III. Doralyn Hickey and Lou Wetherbee, members of an IRC Subcommittee to study the problem of funding attendance of American librarians at international conferences, reported on their findings. Wetherbee reviewed her report on the results of an IRC Overseas Travel Survey. Hickey discussed her proposal for the establishment of an independent foundation to fund such travel and estimated that a minimum of \$50,000 would be required annually to support travel to international meetings. Attached is a copy of her proposal, Funding International Representatives: The Problem and a Possible Solution. (Annex I)

In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that the various American library associations might be asked to contribute to the establishment of such a foundation. It was also suggested that such a foundation might be administered by CNLA. The consensus of the group was that the matter should be pursued further.

III. Sarah Vann (University of Hawaii Graduate School of Library Science) reported on the forthcoming meeting of the International Association of Orientalist Librarians which will be held in Manila concurrent with the IFLA Congress. Theme of the meeting is "Interfacing: Area Collections and Information Exchange in the 80's". Warren Tsuneishi, Library of Congress, will be the rapporteur. Those attending IFLA were encouraged to attend some of the meetings of IAOL.

IV. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.

FUNDING INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:
The Problem and a Possible Solution

Doralyn J. Hickey
Member, International Relations
Committee, American Library
Association

The American Library Association has for a number of years struggled with the problem of trying to assure itself adequate representation in international activities while at the same time avoiding the charge of using scarce funds to support what sometimes seemed to be a kind of international junketing. Although experienced travellers know that overseas trips, especially short ones, can be more debilitating than pleasurable in many instances, those who have not been able to travel abroad generally see such journeys as quite glamorous, filled with elegant receptions and regal dining. In some ways, international representatives are viewed as the "lucky few" who have attained status enough to warrant being sent abroad for an all-expense-paid holiday, with an occasional meeting or two thrown in to satisfy the Internal Revenue Service and the supporting organization.

No doubt enough of such stereotyping of international travellers is warranted to cause the image to persist, despite the falsity that the travellers themselves recognize in the picture. It is often possible to combine a trip to an international conference with further travel abroad, but many times the intent of the additional travel is to broaden the person's understanding of foreign library and information services and to extend personal acquaintances so that communication will be more effective in the future. One frequently overlooked aspect of this expanded travel is the fact that air fare is likely to be significantly lower if the passenger remains overseas for at least seven days. For example, one trip to Paris cost nearly \$900 for less than a week's stay (regular air coach) but would have been reduced to approximately \$600 if the stay had been extended to at least seven days. If the passenger can be flexible enough to go on a "stand by" basis, the fare will be even lower. Unfortunately, those who stay at home may hear about the "fun" part of the trip more than about the meetings attended, thus reinforcing the junketing image.

Part of the persistence of the stereotype may be understood as a failure of the international representatives adequately to communicate the import of the travel to the colleagues who provide the funds to support the trip. The recent efforts of the International Relations Committee (American Library Association) to define the qualifications desirable in international representatives and to specify their responsibilities in reporting to their constituency are a prime example of what can be done to reduce--and hopefully, eventually to eliminate--the misunderstanding of the purposes and accomplishments of overseas travel.

Despite these efforts to help librarians at home appreciate the value of sending representatives to meetings in other countries, the general spirit of frugality and accountability in the United States, which seems to be enjoying a renaissance in the 1980's, mitigates against the spending of large sums to permit international representation, especially when budgets for national efforts are either static or diminished. Curiously, this attitude is resurging just at the time that international communication is

improving, opportunities for effective efforts are burgeoning, and the number of international gatherings seem at an all-time high. Further, the American concern for participative relationships in the development of international standards, guidelines, and systems makes it imperative that responsible personnel be sent to those working sessions in which such developments take place. Without this representation, we will have relatively little effect on the outcome of the deliberations, and our colleagues will feel that something has been "put over" on them.

The dilemma, then, is clear. There are few funds to send representatives to international meetings; when the funds are spent for overseas travel, some will see it as little more than an excuse for someone with "pull" to get a free exotic vacation; yet, the need for international representation and the opportunity for it have never been greater. A casual observation of the list of meetings attended by the staff of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), as provided to the IFLA Professional Board by its officer during 1979, suggests that scarcely a week passes without an important meeting taking place. Conservatively, an estimate of some 50 meetings a year at which American representation ought to occur can be made, based on the listings provided by the library press. Since most travel costs will range between \$800 and \$2,000, it might be calculated that about \$50,000 would be needed annually to allow for basic United States participation in the important world meetings related to library and information services. The figure could easily be inflated to \$100,000 if the "possibly beneficial" meetings were included.

Clearly, no one library or information association can support such a large allocation of funds to overseas travel. The alternative which has been most often selected is to choose representatives who will be able to pay, or obtain local resources to defray, their own expenses. This, of course, limits the options for securing the qualifications most desirable in the representatives, since the "pool" is reduced to those who have funding.

A second alternative has been to obtain an incentive grant which requires the representative to provide part of the costs of the travel but not all. A variation on this is the identification of a foundation, or other monied group, which has a vested interest in the topic of the meeting and is willing to offer funds to support a joint representation.

In relatively rare instances, one association or institution will absorb the entire cost of travel in order to make sure that a fully qualified specialist participates in the meeting. Although this procedure is more likely to occur in the context of governmental organizations and institutions, many library and information groups are recognizing that such support is essential if their interests are to be protected in international activities. The amount of money available to direct toward this support is, nonetheless, relatively low.

Proposal: Recognizing that not all of the constituents of library and information groups will appreciate the value of international representation and that the image of junketing is likely to persist, funding for increased representation utilizing the best-qualified people is most likely to be obtained from individuals who are committed to the value of such representation. Since annual resources of some \$50,000 (minimum) are needed, it is proposed that an international travel fund be established under the aegis of either an organization such as CNLIA (Council of National Library and Information Associations) or an independent foundation. A brief conversation with an attorney indicated

that it is possible, at least under Texas law, to establish a kind of foundation which could receive funds that the donors could count as tax-deductible contributions, so long as the funds were distributed for a quasi-scholarship purpose with "educational" intent. Clearly more legal investigation is needed before such a foundation could be established, but if such an entity could be formed it might then appeal for contributions from those persons who appreciate the value of international representation and want to support it in a special--albeit tax-deductible--way.

There may be other ways to resolve the dilemma between diminishing revenues and increased opportunities to participate internationally. So far, however, these solutions have not emerged. The suggestion for establishing a "scholarship" fund dedicated to this particular effort may not be practicable, but perhaps it will at least stimulate further creative thinking on the problem and eventually produce a viable answer.