

Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association

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#### HOW DO YOU SELECT BOOKS?

A visitor from another planet seeking to learn the basis on which librarians select or reject books would have been mystified, if not downright befuddled, by the diversity of answers which librarians, in word and act, provided to this question in the opening weeks of 1959.

"Untrue to life... consequently unwholesome for children": The 9-page staff manual which the Florida State Library put in the mail was not unusual. Like others of its kind, it sought to provide advice and help to the smaller public libraries of Florida on such matters as working hours, duties of board members, book selection. That statement on book selection, tucked away on page 9, was actually a reprint from a similar manual in a neighboring state - South Carolina.

As far as a news-hungry press was concerned, the first 8 pages never existed, and the words on page 9 became the words, not of the South Carolina State Library, not even of the Florida State Library, but of Florida's State Librarian Dorothy Dodd, who was personally calling on Florida's public libraries "to withdraw from circulation" upwards of 20 "series type" titles, from whose pages such characters as the Wizard of Oz, Uncle Wiggly, Tarzan, Tom Swift, and Horatio Alger had emerged, to the delectation or detriment of the reader of bygone years.

Reasons for the suggested withdrawal, as reported in the press (Chicago Daily News, Feb. 13): These books are "poorly written, untrue to life, sensational, foolishly sentimental, and consequently unwholesome for the children in your community." To many, these words had a harsh (if not downright authoritarian) ring, offensive to sense and sensibility alike. In the argument which ensued, confusion immediately developed over (1) the propriety of any "suggested withdrawal" approach, with its overtones of censorship and state control, (2) the intrinsic values of the books vs. their nostalgic appeal, (3) the whole question of fact vs. fantasy as appropriate for children, and (4) standards of selection in general.

Life, finding itself out of sympathy with Miss Dodd's views, made her (and, by association, librarians at large) the butt of an editorial protest ("Dorothy the Librarian," Feb. 16) wherein it lined up with "children, nostalgic parents, editors, and the vocal public," along with Florida's own Governor Collins. Finding her reasons "tiresome and spurious," the editorial continued, "'Untrue to life' is the worst possible excuse for withholding a book from children. They know a lot more about what's true and untrue than parents do. Myth is truth, sentiment is truth, sensationalism is truth, giants, witches, magic carpets, cowardly lions, and the inventions of Tom Swift are all true and necessary parts of a healthy imaginative life." Life readers, some of them librarians, were split in their reactions (March 9). Samples: "I hope librarians who feel as Dr. Dodd does are in the minority" (a librarian); "Not only Florida librarians but librarians everywhere agree wholeheartedly with Dr. Dodd" (a librarian); "I am on the side of Dorothy of Kansas... as opposed to Dorothy, the Florida librarian" (a Fla. library board member).

A sober second look, after the dust settled and ruffled feathers were smoothed into place, shows that librarian Dodd had a point - and a very sound point: Books become outmoded - and especially children's books - just as surely as manners, or morals, or men's ties, become outmoded, and hence discardable. But the point was all but lost sight of in the melee over the proposal to "withdraw" these titles, and the characterization of them as "unwholesome." Of the latter word, Miss Dodds conceded that "it was used inadvisedly"; on the rest of the statement, Miss Dodds stood firm, stating: "Censorship is not in our heads. But there is the matter of book selection... [and] we think libraries have an obligation to carry only the best for our children." (Tampa, Fla., Tribune, Feb. 20)

"Don't shock the unsuspecting": Pueblo (Col.) librarian Claire Knox, explaining the absence of Lolita and Peyton Place from her shelves, is credited as saying that it is kinder not to have them in the library (Pueblo Star-Journal, Jan. 8). Setting selection in a broader frame, Miss Knox declared: "We do not like to put on our shelves anything that may cause the unsuspecting to be shocked or made unhappy."

"Upon reason rather than emotion": Confronted with a picket-line for having purchased Lolita, City Librarian Castagna (Long Beach, Calif.) gave his standards of selection: "Upon principle rather than personal opinion, reason rather than emotion, objectivity rather than prejudice, and judgment rather than censorship." (Long Beach Independent, Jan. 23)

## THE RIVERSIDE STORY

The Riverside (Calif.) Public Library story is a remarkable one. It was voted "top news story of 1958" in the county, over a murder trial and a Miss America contest, by 150 reporters and editors. It showed a head librarian standing firm against censorship moves proposed by a member of his own board. It showed the pride of a people in their library and what it means to their community - as evidenced in their letters, in their individual statements, in their presence at jam-packed public hearings. It showed the power of the local press in promptly presenting the issues at stake, in sympathetically interpreting the role of its public library, and in openly attacking the trustee whose proposal that the Riverside Library remove from its shelves all books by persons unfavorably listed by the State Legislature's Un-American Activities Committee set off the whole controversy. It showed a board

cognizant in the last analysis of its responsibility to the library and the community as a whole, as it wrote an apparent conclusion to that controversy by formally endorsing the Library Bill of Rights as its policy statement on selection. (Riverside Press-Enterprise, Dec. 11 - Jan. 1; summary in Lj, Feb. 1)

But the Riverside story is not over. On Feb. 3, the City Council demanded of Head Librarian Lake "a complete list of all books bought by the library in the past five years." They promptly got it - all 25,000 titles of it. Announced intention of one Council member: "To find out how many of the books and authors are on the subversive list compiled by the Calif. State Un-American Activities Committee." Under the heading "Foolish Anti-Climax," the Riverside Press (Feb. 4) again stated vigorously its support of the library: "The library deserves better treatment. Any library would, but particularly Riverside's. For it is no ordinary library. We trust the Council, which is really a far better one than yesterday's action would indicate, won't waste its time in further debate on what to do with books by Hemingway and Hammerstein... Riverside has heard enough from the book banners for one winter."

#### THE NEWS MANIPULATORS

The news manipulators, according to columnist Gilbert Hill (Okla. City Times, Dec. 10), once known variously - and more honestly - as "press agents," "publicity men," or "promoters," but now often identified simply as "the press," pose grave threats to the press's traditional freedom. Tracing their origin to the "press officials" attached to government agencies in Washington, Hill notes the appearance of these "special interest men" in trade and labor unions, professional organizations, and local business and industrial groups. Their stock in trade: the "press handout." Their function: "the coloring, the slanting, and in some cases, the concealing of information for radio, for TV, for magazines, and for newspapers." Urgently needed, according to Hill: substitution of the personal interview for the press handout; identification of the bona fide news reporters as the "working press" as separate and distinct from the news manipulators.

In an article headlined "The Pentagon's Closed Door," Time magazine (March 2) examines one such news manipulator at work - Murray Snyder, whose title reads "Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs." In effect documenting Columnist Hill's generalities, the report, in its conclusion, all but uses the columnist's exact words: "Murray Snyder insists that the guidebook [for the government communications man] is the handout (or even better the general press conference), which leaves no room for journalistic enterprise, limits the depth and breadth of information on U. S. defense - for the U. S., its allies and the cold war enemy - to the imagination and enterprise of Murray Snyder."

#### STATE SCOREBOARD

"Objectionable" literature: Maryland's obscene publications bill awaits only the governor's expected signature. The bill, as finally passed, holds an employer responsible for sales of obscene materials by an employee and makes it a crime to allow children to browse through the forbidden literature. (Baltimore News-Post, Mar. 3) The browsing provision was a compromise amendment. Original bill

would have made display of objectionable material where minors may see it proof of intent to sell to minors. Despite strong personal pressure by Baltimore Mayor D'Alesandro, whose Committee for Decency had sponsored the bill, the House Judiciary Committee refused to let the original proposal stand on grounds that it violated the traditional concept that a person is innocent until proved guilty. (Annapolis Capital, Feb. 20)

Montana and West Virginia bills would tighten existing laws by increasing penalties. The Montana measure is directed against sale or distribution of obscene literature or films to persons under 16 years of age (Missoula Missoulian, Jan. 27). The West Virginia proposal, already passed by the House and sent to the Senate, prohibits possessing, selling, or giving away materials "manifestly tending to corrupt the morals of our youth" (Charleston Gazette, Jan. 21; Huntington Advertiser, Feb. 20).

The Washington House of Representatives on Feb. 3 passed unanimously and sent to the Senate two bills designed to replace a 1955 law declared unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court. One bill would allow prosecuting attorneys to obtain court injunctions halting sale and distribution of obscene materials; the other would make sale and distribution of such material a gross misdemeanor.

Submitted to the Illinois House is a bill prohibiting sale or distribution to persons under 18 years publications primarily devoted to "horror, terror, brutality, violence, passion, depravity, or immorality." Excluded are news accounts of crime and "legitimate historical accounts of crime."

"Hate" literature: In New York, hate literature has been added to categories under surveillance by the Joint Legislative Committee on Offensive and Obscene Material. The committee, originally set up in 1949 to study comics, has broadened its scope over the years to include magazines, books, TV, movies, and radio. State Atty. Gen. Lefkowitz, who requested the committee to investigate hate literature in the state, described such material as "directed toward a particular class or race... with but one purpose - to arouse animosity and hatred." Much of the material, he said, is printed and distributed in New York. (Albany Times-Union, Jan. 5, 15)

Aimed at both "indecent" and "hate" literature is a bill already introduced which would require the disclosure of the authorship and sponsorship of "scandalous, scurrilous or indecent literature" (N. Y. Post, Jan. 14).

Films: Ever since Ohio's film censorship law was declared unconstitutional in 1954 as a result of U. S. Supreme Court rulings, censorship proponents have been trying to get a statute back on the books. In 1957, a Senate committee rejected an attempt to restore prior censorship. Now a Senate bill would establish a 5-member censorship board and define obscene films. Author of the bill is reported as saying that a film censorship law, in order to be constitutional, would have to be limited to "obscenity" but that once the courts have passed upon the question of constitutionality, the Legislature could then expand the scope of censorship. (Variety, Feb. 11) Gov. Di Salle has come out openly against movie censorship "as a matter of principle." Said the Governor: "To set up someone to try to act as a censor, to say what a person should see, could be something very well violative of the First Amendment of the Constitution." (Columbus Dispatch, Feb. 20)

Meanwhile, two film companies are seeking refunds of fees paid into Ohio's treasury under the old censorship law. Following a Paramount Pictures suit in U.S. District Court at Columbus for \$54,000, 20th Century Fox filed a similar suit for \$750,000. (Variety, Feb. 11)

Jointly sponsored in the Maryland House and Senate is a bill empowering the State Board of Motion Picture Censors to stamp certain films as unfit for children under 18. Rallying behind the measure is said to be a powerful alliance of PTA groups, Roman Catholic lay organizations, and women's clubs. (Washington Post, Feb. 12)

A bill introduced in the New York Legislature would require the censor board to license films as "suitable" in three categories - "for general patronage," "for adults and adolescents," and "for adults only," with the added requirement that the classification of each film be stated in all advertising and at the theatre. In curious contrast was a bill reportedly being drawn up which would make it illegal to use "misleading" advertisements, such as labeling a film "for adults only." (N. Y. Times, Feb. 8)

In late February, a New York joint legislative committee held public hearings on bills which would broaden the powers of the State Education Dept. over movies suitable for minors and broaden state controls over objectionable film advertising. To be classified as "unsuitable for children" by the Education Dept. would be films which, "though licensed, portrayed nudity, violence, brutality, sadism, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction or sexual conduct not proper to the moral development of children." (N. Y. Post, Feb. 26)

A Kansas House committee is studying a proposal calling for abolition of the State Board of Review (Kansas City, Mo., Times, Feb. 21). A U.S. Supreme Court 1955 decision, in overruling the board's ban on The Moon Is Blue, declared the Kansas censorship law unconstitutional (Jan., July 1956 Newsletter); but the State Legislature has let the 3-woman board continue. A recent increase in censorship fees (which must be paid entirely by film distributors) and a decree by the board's chairman that all copies of a film must be sent to the censors for reviewing brought new demands to get rid of "this shameful institution" and "state-supported racket" (Wichita Beacon, Jan. 4)

Perhaps the Legislature will be helped along in its decision by a recent court action, in which Trans-Lux Distributing Corp., charging that the censor body is illegal, has filed suit to prevent the board from clipping the childbirth scene from The Case of Dr. Laurent (Variety, Feb. 11)

#### ALONG THE LOCAL FRONT

In Houston, Texas, quick action by Howard F. McGaw, Head Librarian at the University and former Texas CIF Chairman, helped to halt the book banners before they got started. When Houston's mayor announced on Jan. 27 that one of the first projects of his Youth Citizenship Commission would be the establishment of a censorship committee on movies and literature for teen-agers (Houston Post, Jan. 27), McGaw immediately wrote the mayor a 5-page protest, citing 19 references in pointing out to the Commission that censorship "is fraught with many risks and actual dangers that the well-intentioned censors usually overlook or ignore." The

Post (Jan. 31) carried a detailed report on McGaw's letter and when the Youth Commission met on Feb. 9, no mention was made of censorship or a censorship board.

At other points along the local front, despite protests by press and public, the censors were not so promptly halted. Most extensive campaign reported was in Watertown, N. Y., where, on Jan. 23, it was revealed that "a quiet campaign to remove the books and magazines" from local newsstands had been underway for a month. Basis of campaign: a National Office for Decent Literature list of objectionable publications which had accompanied a N. Y. state joint legislative committee report. Contents of list: some 200 paperbound books and 90 magazines.

Campaign was initiated by the district attorney at a meeting attended by the only major distributor in the county and representatives from the police and sheriff's departments. The DA stressed that the campaign was being conducted on a "mutual understanding" basis. He added, however, that by state law his office could proceed criminally or civilly against any news service or retailer in the event cooperation was not given. (Watertown Daily Times, Jan. 21)

The "cooperation" was complete. The sole news agency announced on Jan. 23: "If, perchance, any such item in the opinion of anyone is salacious and is being distributed by us, we shall be pleased to know it and will take necessary action."

The Daily Times (Jan. 22) disapproved of the whole procedure: "The district attorney has permitted himself to become a party to an ill-advised act. What he has done is to set himself up as an agent to a list... The best example of why censorship and suppression by list are wrong is that in the roundup of paperback books, such titles as Andersonville, the winner of the 1955 Pulitzer Prize, become victims."

The fireworks went off on New Year's Eve in Austin, Texas when the Austin Advisory Committee on Newsstand Displays, closely connected with the City Council of Parents and Teachers, pressured Austin's only magazine distributor to remove 25 "objectionable" magazines from city newsstands. The PTA group had demanded that all "girlie and sex-type" reading matter be kept from juveniles. "Extra-legal censorship," charged a Unitarian minister. The county attorney, though opposed to censorship for adults, applauded the PTA's efforts to keep the magazines from youngsters. The Pharmaceutical Association deplored the resort to such extra-legal procedures, pointing out that under Texas law all that is needed is for a citizen to buy an objectionable magazine, take it to the district or county attorney, and file charges. Most complete and vigorous protest came from seven Texas U. law professors, wherein they called for a public hearing "to aid the community in getting a fuller understanding of the constitutional guarantees of free speech and press and of the proper role of unofficial groups concerned with the quality of reading material offered for sale in the community." (Austin Statesman, Jan. 8, 10, 15; Daily Texan, Jan. 6, 16, 18)

## THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

It looked as though just about everybody wanted in on "what Johnny can read" - and that just about everybody had pretty definite ideas that Johnny should read only the

"right" things, too. A college professor attacked history texts; the DAR proposed a close look at texts in one state; in another state a legislative committee listened to mothers' grievances against texts their children used; in still another state, a county school board went on record as opposing any attempts by the citizenry to set up a screening group for school texts; school use of a prize-winning juvenile was prohibited in two states; the Fiske study findings drew national comment (though the full study had not yet been published); a long-standing union-imposed Boston ban on a well-known text publisher was reported.

"Brainwashing" through history texts charged: The appearance in late 1958 of a book by one-time Earlham College (Richmond, Ind.) professor E. Merrill Root, sensationally titled Brainwashing in the High Schools: An Examination of 11 American History Textbooks, sent school administrators and faculty scurrying to look again at the books and man their defenses. Most school officials expressed amazement both at Root's charges and at the authors he had included, but promised a quick review of books in question. A rash of editorials appeared across the land, along with outbursts from readers made apprehensive by the overtones inherent in the Root title and by Root's widely quoted charges that the 11 texts portray, among other things: (1) George Washington as a "rich aristocrat who had no use for the common people"; (2) patriotism as "stuffy and old hat"; (3) business and industry as "enemies of the people." (Elmira, N. Y., Star-Gazette, Dec. 5) Tone of most editorials was reflected in the Rock Hill, S. C., Herald (Jan. 5): "The charges may be grossly unfair. They may be biased. And they may have some truth in them. The thing to do is to find out."

"Find out" is exactly what the Akron, O., Beacon-Journal (Jan. 29) proceeded to do. In a lengthy (6-column) account, staff writer Herb Michelson took close look at Root and his writings, detailed Akron's school text selection policies, and detailed the answers by top Akron school officials to Root's charges. Said Supt. Essex of Root's attacks, "utterly irresponsible," and added, "It is still easy to communicate fear," thus echoing in tone the words of Evanston, Ill., educator Michael: "The title of the Root book itself gets people worked up. Many won't go beyond the title."

DAR seeks list of all textbooks used in Connecticut schools: William Curtis, president of the Conn. Assn. of Public School Superintendents, in receipt of a request from a DAR official for a list of all primary and secondary texts used in the state's schools, referred her to R. R. Bowker's Textbooks in Print for the information she sought. Author of the request, Miss Barbara Allen, state chairman of national defense of the DAR, when asked the reason for her request, replied, "I can't tell you the reason, except that I am carrying out instructions of our National Headquarters in Washington." (N. Y. Times, Dec. 6)

Florida mothers criticize, legislators listen: In three hours of testimony before Florida's Interim Committee on Education, a group of Florida mothers attacked state textbooks as "subversive," noted that a health text contained an illustration that was "a little too complete," and supplemented their oral remarks with marginal notes scribbled on the texts. The patient legislators, noting that some of the quotes from the texts were taken out of context, wondered later whether their time had been well spent. (Miami Herald, Jan. 4) Observed the Pensacola News-Journal: "Laymen, or parents, have a very important duty to our school system, that of maintaining interest in all phases of the program... But when it comes to being

qualified as judges of the material in textbooks and how it is taught, they usually are out of their sphere." (Tallahassee Democrat, Jan. 13)

California county school board opposes citizen textbook probe: The San Bernadino County Board of Education, faced with a grand jury recommendation that a special citizens' committee be created to look for and weed out school texts containing subversive materials, cautioned citizens to "continue their contacts with their school board representatives on any and all school questions before seeking to create extra citizens' committees." Added the Board: The "primary" citizens' group in the field of education is the local Board of Education itself. (S. B. Sun, Feb. 11)

Prize-winning juvenile banned in two states: When Alice Cobb's The Swimming Pool was published by Friendship Press, under National Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. auspices, it won the 1957 Nancy Bloch award for its contribution to fostering inter-group understanding among children. Finding its story about boys of various races and religions and their effects on community relationships unacceptable, the boards of education in Mississippi and South Carolina prohibited the use of Miss Cobb's book in their schools. (Publishers' Weekly, Dec. 8)

Fiske study, unpublished, basis for sweeping claims: Findings of the Fiske study, though originally limited to California librarians (Sept. Newsletter), are the basis for a sweeping assertion by the National Citizens Council for Better Schools that "school librarians in many U. S. public schools function as unofficial censors who keep controversial works out of the libraries," in a nationally syndicated report (Baltimore, Md., News-Post, Dec. 31; Okla. City Times, Dec. 31). A Council spokesman is quoted as saying the Fiske findings, which showed California librarians as timid, are "typical."

Boston textbook ban reported: A New London, Conn., account reports what it calls "an eye-popping sort of disclosure" of a 15-year-ban in Boston against the purchase of texts published by American Book Company. Reason for ban: protest in the early 1940's by a labor union that ABC was then employing non-union help. (New London Day, Dec. 2) The account concludes: "The original school board, confronted with this request - or demand - by a labor union, ought to have dealt with the situation then and there, with a polite statement that it would select the best book for the given job."

## ON AND OFF THE CAMPUS

Modern American authors, English teachers, and college magazine editors had a rough time of it on some campuses in the past weeks. At the University of Chicago, a prolonged hassle among students, faculty and administration over the contents of the Chicago Review was touched off by columnist Mabley's blast (Chicago Daily News, Oct. 25) against the Review's Autumn issue, wherein he advised the trustees of the University to "take a long hard look at what is being circulated under their sponsorship." In the course of the hassle, the editor and most of his staff resigned, and the Winter issue failed to appear. A special student government committee, in a lengthy report (Report of the Special Committee of the Student Government in re: The Chicago Review, Jan. 28, 1959, 23p.), asserted that "the resignation of the editors and the failure of the Winter issue to appear were both due to pressure imposed by the Administration on the editors," and that "the University threatened to

prevent publication of the Review if the editors attempted to print manuscripts which might cause further adverse press comment about the University." Central (and unresolved) question in the hassle: Who has the final say on the contents of a student-edited publication?

The same question was posed by events at Queens College (New York), where New Poems, a student magazine, was placed under ban by college authorities, following sale of 1,000 copies, because of a controversial poem about a young woman facing an illegal operation. Poem, authored by a Phi Beta Kappa senior, was pronounced "in bad taste" with religious "ramifications" offensive to some groups by Associate Dean Spitz. (N. Y. Long Island Star Journal, Jan. 7) Suggested two readers: "First, ban all publications offensive to atheists, agnostics, and iconoclasts; then ban all publications which are offensive; and lastly, just ban all publications." (N. Y. Post, Jan. 14)

At Santa Ana College, John Steinbeck and 9 other American authors were approved as texts for use in a Modern American Novel course, but only after they had been placed on a 28-day "waiting list for public inspection and approval" by the Santa Ana Board of Education. Sole objector to the list, Mrs. Edwin A. Jester, commented, "The whole bunch seems rather dismal, filled with grief and sin." Replied Professor McNelly, of the English Department, "If Mrs. Jester is worried about exposing students to grief and sin, then we would have to eliminate the Greek tragedies and most of Shakespeare's works." Questioning the propriety of the board's action in approving or disapproving texts for such courses, McNelly said, "We are very close to book banning and this distresses me very much." Earlier (and unexplained) deletions from the list when opposition was raised - two works by John Dos Passos. (Santa Ana, Calif., Register, Jan. 14)

### ZHIVAGO AND THE UGLY AMERICAN

It was no ordinary rejection slip - but, then, it was no ordinary novel. The editors of the Russian literary periodical Novy Mir had just finished Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago. Finding it "profoundly unfair...historically prejudiced...profoundly anti-democratic and alien to any concept of the interests of the people...a distressing experience," their 10,000-word letter was perhaps the longest rejection slip in history. They put their findings very bluntly: "The spirit of your novel is that of non-acceptance of the Socialist Revolution... As people whose standpoint is diametrically opposed to yours, we naturally believe that the publication of your novel in...Novy Mir is out of the question." (N. Y. Times Book Review, Dec. 7) In short, what Pasternak had to say was unflattering and unpopular - and hence not acceptable - to the Russian government.

The Ugly American was another book with some unflattering and unpopular things to say about another government - the U.S. government - its diplomacy and its foreign aid programs in the Far East. The original ban placed on it by the U.S. Information Agency, which disallowed sales of it abroad under the Informational Media Guaranty program, though perhaps understandable, seemed to many too like the Russian decision on Zhivago for comfort. USIA officials took a second look - and lifted the ban (Publishers' Weekly, Dec. 15), thus allowing sales of the book abroad and showing, in the words of PW's Melcher, "a willingness to let facts have their say."

## FOOTNOTES ON LOLITA

Nabokov's narrative of a nymphet continued to draw attentive looks from such diverse figures as a British M. P., a Catholic priest, public librarians, and pickets.

In Britain, the contemplated publication of Lolita, in the face of a current ban, is assuming some importance as a side issue in British politics. Nigel Nicholson, of Weidenfeld and Nicholson, publishing firm reported willing to risk prosecution to bring out the book, is a central figure in what is termed the "first primary election in British political history." Nicholson foes are finding in Lolita convenient fuel for fanning further the controversy between Nicholson and his district Conservative party, according to the N. Y. Post (Feb. 1). Meanwhile, oddly enough, the public library of Britain's resort town Tunbridge Wells continued to offer its Paris-purchased copy of Lolita to its readers, as it has, unperturbed and unhampered, for the past three years (Time, March 2).

It was 10 a.m. of a Thursday outside the Long Beach (Calif.) main library. Three placard-bearing pickets arrived, one man and two women, loudly proclaiming "Ban Lolita," "Lolita Must Go" in protest against the purchase of 7 copies by the library. Local press, in prompt and prominent coverage, supported the library and took occasion to outline in detail the position and policies of the library, as explained by City Librarian Castagna. (Long Beach Independent, Jan. 23) Adds Castagna, of the incident, "Strangely enough, at the time the pickets were going around, I was engaged in bringing some old Bibles from a bookstore to the Library, but the bringing in of holy material is much less newsworthy than the presence of a sensational book." (letter to Newsletter, Feb. 5)

On the other side of the country, meanwhile, the decision by the Albany (N. Y.) public library not to stock Lolita met with praise from a Roman Catholic priest. Terming the book "sex-scdden," Father Holden continued, "To our way of thinking, Albany libraries have manifested good taste in the extreme in deciding not to stock Lolita." (Knickerbocker News, Jan. 23)

### AND ALSO

Canadian librarians on obscenity: The request of "certain groups of Canadian citizens" that a definition of obscenity be included in the Criminal Code "in an attempt to obtain stricter control of objectionable literature" moved The Canadian Library Association, at its 13th annual conference, to adopt a resolution deploring "the inclusion in the Criminal Code of such a definition of obscenity, as might tend to limit freedom of inquiry or to restrict the availability of any pertinent library materials." (CLA Bulletin, Sept. 1958)

Chaplin film ban lifted: The ban imposed on 4 Chaplin films by the Hicksville (L. I.) Public Library trustees (Dec. Newsletter) has been lifted, following widespread community protest. Original purpose of ban: "to prevent dissension in the community." (N. Y. Times, Dec. 19)

KU's "Banned Books" exhibit popular: When Kansas U. 's library prepared its "Banned Books" exhibit (June 1958 Newsletter) it offered it as a traveling display to any libraries wishing it. After showings in Lawrence, Kans., Gary, Ind., and

a dozen or so other libraries, it will go on to the Cornell P. L. in Ithaca, N. Y., and other libraries in North Carolina, Texas, and California. Bookings already run through November 1959, according to the Wichita Eagle (Feb. 21).

Supreme Court to review L. A. bookdealer conviction: On Jan. 12, the U. S. Supreme Court agreed to review the conviction of Los Angeles book dealer Eleazar Smith who was convicted under a local ordinance for possessing at his place of business an allegedly obscene book - Mark Tryon's Sweeter Than Life (N. Y. Times, Jan. 13). Decision may provide a long-awaited opportunity for the Court to declare itself more specifically on what it considers "obscenity" to be.

New York VFW tie-in with FBI: The VFW in New York State is reported to be working "under the direction of" FBI head J. Edgar Hoover, to "root out any examples of indecency in the printed word, in entertainment or any other area of exposure where young people might be morally affected." (Troy Times-Record, Jan. 20)

WHAT NEXT?

But why "Jackson"?: Deacon R. T. Walker of the First Baptist Church of Lolita, Texas, declared: "We feel that our town has been smeared by this book." The deacon's solution: rename the town Jackson. (United Press International)

Print potent: "With 15 million sex magazines sold each month on our newstands it is little wonder that each year a quarter of a million high school girls go from their high school desks to the maternity ward." (Jack Wyrzten, New York missionary to young people, quoted in the Boston Traveler)

Classification comprehensive: "Objectionable" literature is, in the words of the Laurel (Mont.) Decent Literature Council, that which "glorifies crime or the criminal; describes in detail ways to commit criminal acts; holds lawful authority in disrespect; exploits horror, cruelty, or violence; portrays sex facts offensively; features indecent, lewd, or suggestive photographs or illustrations; carries advertising which is offensive in content or advertises products which may lead to physical or moral harm; uses blasphemous, profane, or obscene speech indiscriminately and repeatedly; holds up to ridicule any national, Christian, or other religious or racial group." (Laurel, Mont., Gazette)