



newsletter

ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

PUBLISHED BY THE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, ARCHIE L. McNEAL, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI, CHAIRMAN, EDITED BY LEROY CHARLES MERRITT, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF LIBRARIANSHIP, BERKELEY.

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No. 1

N. H. Librarians Urged: Back Anti-Smut Law

CONCORD — New Hampshire librarians are urged to support a proposed *new law on obscene literature* as the “most civilized, clearest” way to meet the professional problem of banned books.

Concluding a series of three meetings around the state this week, the N.H. Library Association heard the assistant director of the Boston Public Library declare that obscene literature in this states exists in a “very muddy” state of thinking which House Bill 486 could clear.

The measure was referred to the State Judicial Council by the 1963 Legislature for public hearings and report to the 1965 General Court.

Speaking at Durham, Littleton and Marlboro, Ervin J. Gaines of Boston pointed out that the measure would allow for a book, magazine or other publication to be “tried” in Superior Court and a determination made as to whether it is obscene. Now, an individual has to be tried under a criminal charge to decide the issue. If the proposed bill were law, librarians and book sellers would have a clear-cut rule under which to operate, he believes.

He added that the recent decision in this state on the book *Tropic of Cancer* had found the book itself obscene — but the bookseller innocent. The decision, he agreed, offered no clear solution to the problem of whether the book is to be circulated in this state.— *Manchester Union Leader*, 19 October.

Controversy, Anyone?

We constantly read in the daily press, and in journals of the book trade and library world, about books which are under fire for being controversial. Many of them are banned from sale in various parts of this country. We, here in the library, worry about these problems. We hope we've been doing our job properly and have selected books for our library which *are* controversial. We have no intention of loading our collections with bland pap, which does nothing but dull the senses and contributes to intellectual apathy. Skim the attached list and you'll find some books you don't agree with. Let's get a little “raging dialogue” going. The only prerequisite is that the books must be read.— *Kansas Wesleyan University Kernels, Livres and Chaff*, October.

Montana LA Scores One

The Sidney, Montana, Library Board on September 24th voted (5-1) to remove from the Public Library four magazines: *American Opinion*, *National Review*, *The Nation*, and *Saturday Review*, because of certain unspecified objections to the content of the magazines. In a letter from the Executive Committee of the Montana Library Association, Association President Natalie Slipecevich wrote the City Library Board that removal of the magazines “is contrary to the principles expressed in the Library Bill of Rights which contain the basic policies which should govern the services of all libraries and in which the Association firmly believes.” The Sidney Public Library Board voted unanimously on November 14th to rescind its earlier action, thus restoring the magazines to the shelves, but decided to place a ban on statements by individual Board members concerning the controversy. The latter action appeared to be necessary because one of the Board members had stated the magazines were dropped because of budgetary difficulty, whereas Board Chairman Elmer Page said finances were not mentioned in the September 24th discussion.

The Right to Read Privately

To the Editor:

I would like to call your attention to the news item which I am enclosing from the *New York Times*, dated November 27, 1963. This article states, among other matters, that Lee Oswald was a borrower at the Napoleon Branch of the New Orleans Public Library, and that the Librarian there “. . . at a reporter's request pulled cards from a number of books on government and international politics” to find the volumes which Oswald had borrowed.

I believe that a Library Bill of Rights which proclaims the “Freedom to Read” should include among those rights, the right to read privately. I am not concerned here with the legality of a librarian reporting the reading habits of its borrowers to a properly constituted authority such as the FBI (although considering the illegality of wire tapping this too might be called into question) but with the threat to privacy which I think is essential in the reader-book relationship. If we must read with the understanding that some one may be looking over our shoulder and following our pursuit into truths of all kinds and in whatever corner, it seems to me the Bill of Rights itself loses all force, and we are again in danger of becoming a nation of readers of that which is safe, acceptable, and ultimately meaningless.—Agnes H. Stein, New City, N.Y.

Batchelder Makes a Friend

(Except for deletion of identifying names and places, the following is a verbatim transcription of a recent exchange of correspondence between a concerned parent and ALA Headquarters. Miss Batchelder also sent copies of Booklist annotations of all Fast books mentioned.)

October 27, 1963

ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee
50 East Huron Street
Chicago 11, Illinois

Recently, a new teacher in high school objected to the presence in the school library of books by Howard Fast (*Citizen Tom Paine, Goethals and the Panama Canal, Patrick Henry*, and especially, *The American*) on grounds that the author is a communist and that the books are "so far left that they are required reading in the Soviet Union."

As a parent and former librarian I have been asked to serve on a committee to decide whether to keep the books off the shelves (removed at present) along with the principal complainant (!!!), librarian and one other parent. I suspect that no one else on the committee is likely to be deeply opposed to censorship and for that reason I am writing directly to you for help rather than going through library channels.

Yesterday I was informed that the meeting is to be held this coming Thursday which leaves very little time (Possibly, when the principal returns, I can get it postponed). I have found many general articles (*Lib. Jour. & Wilson's L. B.*) on censorship that are helpful, but deeply need aid and advice on this specific complaint — Howard Fast's books in high school libraries. Is there a parallel case?

Also, any *pertinent humor* you might suggest would be most helpful, in relieving my own as well as the tension of others.

Many, many thanks for any help you can give.

Cordially,

October 30, 1963

Dear Mrs.:

As I indicated in my telephone conversation with you, I am sending you several reprints which may be helpful.

In addition you may wish to obtain a Public Affairs Pamphlet (No. 344) called *Freedom to Read* by Peter Jennison. This is 25 cents. This address is 22 East 38th Street, New York 16.

Mr. Fast's recent book, *April Morning*, is not only in our new *Basic Book Collection for High Schools*, but is in practically every recent list of books for young adults.

Sincerely yours,
Mildred L. Batchelder
ALA Staff Liaison
Committee on Intellectual Freedom

November 8, 1963

Dear Miss Batchelder:

Your kindness in telephoning October 30th took me quite by surprise. Afterwards I thought of many questions, but it was enough to have your moral support as expressed by the call.

Our committee meeting was held yesterday afternoon

and thanks to the materials you had sent me our "side" was well prepared to meet any complaints. You will be pleased to know that the committee decided to replace all of Howard Fast's books on the high school library shelves. The one member who had suggested they be removed was completely pleasant, and while I'm sure he still has his doubts about *The American*, he is not one of our emotional right-wingers, who scare the be-jabbers out of me!

Our meeting was completely unpublicised (thank heavens, as the local paper is even against public schools), and went so smoothly that I felt rather silly for having devoted ten whole days to reading all of Fast's available books and everything I could find about him and censorship. I even had a speech prepared! And abandoned it when I saw how smoothly everything was going.

If you're ever in this section it would give me great pleasure to meet you. Again, thank you.

Cordially,

Protest "Virginia Woolf" Censorship

The Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts has protested the action of a Boston censor who requested the deletion of "irreverent" lines in Edward Albee's play, "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf." The play, now showing in Boston in its deleted version, has created a storm of controversy among local newspaper editors and drama critics.

The center of the controversy is Boston's unofficial "censor," Richard J. Sinnott. Sinnott functions officially as chief of the city's licensing bureau and as press secretary to the mayor, and has no legal power to censor or prohibit the production of plays.

A Boston *Herald* editorial has noted that under the Boston licensing statute Sinnott's authority is limited to attending performances and reporting his observations to the mayor, leaving all subsequent action up to the mayor himself. The *Herald* commented also that there seemed to be no evidence that Sinnott had even consulted with the mayor before writing to request deletions in the play.

Sinnott's letter to the theatre management read in part: "It is requested that all use of the Lord's name wherever it appears in context of this play be deleted. . . . It should be noted that the expressions 'Jesus Christ', 'Jesus' and 'Christ' are used by millions of Christians and abuse of these names is highly offensive. Therefore, may I also ask you if a repetition of profanity is necessary once the tone has been set and cannot this type of language be reduced?"

Sinnott has admitted himself that there is no justification for his title of "city censor" and has asked the city legal department to spell out his powers regarding the supervision of dramatic productions and entertainment.

The MCLU's statement charged Sinnott with "a clear abuse of his authority" as secretary to Mayor John F. Collins, and asked the Mayor for an appointment to discuss the matter. The MCLU statement declared also that "It is clear that any attempt to interfere with this play would be illegal and unconstitutional both under the decisions of our Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and the U.S. Supreme Court. —*Feature Press Service*, October 21.

Geller Protests Covina Story

(Los Angeles County Librarian William S. Geller has protested the handling of the story on page 79 of the November Newsletter entitled "Covina Housewife Wins in Book Banning." Regretfully, the editor failed to properly attribute the story directly to the newspaper from which it was taken verbatim. Mr. Geller's accounts of the whole affair as reported to the editor and to the members of his Advisory Councils are given below.)

For a factual account of this entire matter, I am enclosing a communication which I sent to members of our Regional Library Advisory Councils on August 15, 1963, for their information and consideration. Since that time, I have met with many of our eight Regional Library Advisory Councils and they have, without exception, recommended retention of the books in question on the shelves in the children's sections of our libraries. The Councils have also expressed the belief that parents have responsibility for the reading material used by their children and have recommended that the Library cooperate with parents who do not wish their children reading books on sex education or any other subject.

I want to point out that the books in question have not been banned in any of the 117 branches and outlets of the Los Angeles County Public Library system. These books are still available to any child who wishes to read them and whose parent does not object. They are also available to any adult who wishes to read them.

Our branch librarians have reported no difficulty in carrying out the interim policy as indicated in the last paragraph on page 1 of the attached statement.

While our final recommendation has not yet been submitted to, or discussed with Mr. Bonelli, it appears that it will be that children's books on sex education, which meet the standards of the Los Angeles County Public Library, will be on the open shelves in the children's sections. Further, it will be recommended that any parent who wishes to restrict the reading of his children on sex or any other matters, will receive the full cooperation of the Los Angeles County Public Library.

I would also like to point out that the Education Code of the State of California (Section 27206) states the following concerning the duties of the County Librarian in the State of California:

"The county librarian shall, subject to the general rules adopted by the board of supervisors, build up and manage, according to accepted principles of library management, a library for the use of the people of the county, and shall determine what books and other library equipment shall be purchased." (Emphasis added.)

TO ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

August 15, 1963

On April 1, 1963, my first day in office as County Librarian, I was visited by the parents of a young girl (11 years) who objected to the fact that their daughter had checked out children's books on sex education from one of our library branches during a school class visit. I explained to them our book selection policy and safe them copies of the reviews and emphasized the care and consideration that the Library takes in select-

ing all reading material for children. The parents, however, indicated that they were not satisfied and that they had no intention of dropping the matter.

I heard nothing further until approximately the middle of June when I was informed that a petition signing campaign was being conducted County wide under the sponsorship of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, urging that the County Library re-evaluate its policy governing its circulation of sexual education books written for children.

On Monday, August 12, I met with Supervisor Frank G. Bonelli, our Departmental Chairman on the Board of Supervisors, and some citizens who had been active in this matter, and we discussed the situation. At that time I agreed that our policy governing the circulation of sex education books to children would be reviewed and re-evaluated. At this meeting the persons who submitted the petition bearing approximately 1600 names to Mr. Bonelli indicated that there was no official connection between the petition and the Adventists. This was later clarified when the Educational Director of the Southern California Conference of the church explained to one of my staff members that petitions were sent out to many of the churches in the Los Angeles County and that when they had been returned they were turned over to the proponents.

This matter has, I believe, been rather blown out of proportion in some of the newspaper accounts, due largely to semantic misunderstandings. At the present time our policy regarding these books is being re-evaluated and instructions are being issued to my staff that pending completion of the evaluation, the books in question are to be placed on parents' shelves in branches where they have such facilities or are to be placed behind the circulation desk.

I am confident that working together with Mr. Bonelli the County Library, with the assistance and wise counsel of the Advisory Council members, can work out an approach to this problem which eliminates any implications of governmental censorship and at the same time recognizes the matter of parental responsibility in connection with the reading material of children. I want to say that I believe that this type of public concern about the County Library is healthy and that it will produce constructive results.

The basic issue, I believe, is whether books on sex education written for children should be freely available to them on the shelves of the juvenile collection, or whether such information should only be given them by their parents. It's a moot question.

I would appreciate receiving your personal evaluation of the books in question if you have the opportunity to drop by the Library and examine copies of them. The books in question are *The Wonderful Story of You* by Dr. and Mrs. Benjamin C. Gruenberg and *What's Happening to Me* by Marion O. Lerrigo and Helen Southard.

Vatican Council

The Vatican ecumenical council gave final approval 25 November to an appeal to civil authorities throughout the world to assure freedom of information. The council ratified a decree of mass communications, such as the press, radio, television and the arts. The vote was 1598 to 503.

"City of Night" in New Haven

(When the Editor received a clipping of the second of the two letters to the Editor of the New Haven Register shown below, he wrote to Librarian Meredith Bloss to inquire what the small wisp of smoke was about. Mr. Bloss responded by sending a clipping of the first letter along with his own comments, which also are reproduced below.)

A Book Matter

15 September

To the Editor of The Register:

For quite a number of weeks under "What New Haven is Reading" you have listed "City of Night," a novel by John Rechy.

Only those who can afford to buy all the best-selling books in New Haven are reading this; as our Free Public Library has decided that it shouldn't be read by those who can't purchase it, and refuses to make it available to its readers, despite the great demand for it.

Reviews of the book were carried by The New York Times, The New York Herald Tribune, Time, etc.—also ads for it. Why should our Public Library decide we cannot read it. Censorship? What else!

PUBLIC LIBRARY USER

About Censorship

6 October

To the Editor of The Register:

Recent letters dealing with the failure of the New Haven Free Public Library to make available a certain best-seller to the reader because the powers-that-be felt it unsuitable, brings up a point often lost sight of in the argument about censorship.

Failure to provide their readers with the book does mean that many of them cannot read it; but on the other hand it increases the sale of the book in book stores, because those who cannot get it through the Public Library will go elsewhere and buy it. So the author of a "censored" book must be happy about the fact because it increases the royalties! — H.L.

Below Accepted Standards

I assume that the writer of the second letter is referring to the same book as the writer of the first letter. Neither complainant has identified himself to the Library nor so far as any of the staff is able to recall has any formal or informal request for the book ever been made.

In other words, so far as we know the complainants, if there were two, must simply have checked the catalog and not finding the card assumed the book was neither on order or not in stock.

As to the question: Does the New Haven Library have the book "City of Night," the answer is "no." On the basis of mixed-to-negative reviews and the estimate of the librarian on our staff who read it our best judgment has been that it was not an appropriate choice for this public library collection and did not meet the accepted standards in effect here.

The question: whether non-selection of any title is censorship is certainly a debatable one. I do not subscribe to the theory that demand for a book should force the library to have it, when the book itself is by all the standards of doubtful or negative value. I do not think that rejection under these circumstances is censorship.—Meredith Bloss

Over and Over

The American Book Publishers Council, through its general counsel Horace S. Manges, has voiced opposition to a proposed Connecticut commission to investigate "apparent violations" of the state anti-obscenity laws. Manges said that the effect of such a commission would be to frighten off sales of books without court determination of their obscenity, which was the finding of the U.S. Supreme Court in March when it declared unconstitutional the activities of the Rhode Island Commission to Encourage Morality in Youth.—*ACLU Feature Press Service*, 28 October.

"Catcher" Keeps Catching It

Catcher in the Rye came into controversy in Somers, CONNECTICUT, in September, when Mrs. John D'arcy protested its place on a supplementary reading list for 10th grade English. And went out of controversy when the Somers school board on October 23 reaffirmed (7-1) confidence in the administration and teaching staff, its right to approve books used by students and required books to be read by all students, but that parents be given the right to approve for their children books on the supplementary list.

An outraged Baltimore county mother protested bitterly on November 9 about the "shocking profanity" in a "trashy" novel her 16-year old son was reading for his English class at Overlea Senior High School. The book, Don Robertson's *By Antietam Creek*, had been selected by the boy from the school library after finding that the first five titles on a required reading list were unavailable because "he was in a hurry to get out of the library." Not on the required list, the book was "on the shelves for limited use by better students," according to assistant county superintendent Quentin Earhart. The mother, who works for the state VFW office, has not filed a formal complaint; the ruckus was stirred up by State VFW commander Michael J. Bonadio.

The Parkway School District has removed Frederick Lewis Allen's *Only Yesterday* from the required reading list for advanced eighth grade students at Parkway Junior High School in response to one anonymous request, according to the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* of November 3. Superintendent C. W. Farnham said he understood that other parents had protested to school board members. The book will remain in the high school library, and, said Farnham, "The action will not constitute a precedent for suppression of other controversial reading matter."

The Columbus, OHIO, school board was under fire in mid-October from a small group of parents who protested that smutty literature was not wanted in the public schools. The board agreed with the proposition, but insisted that it must have specific titles and passages before it could take action. Titles which did get into the oral set-to were *Catcher in the Rye*, *Brave New World*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *1984*. Several anthologies by and including Langston Hughes were also involved, charges here including blasphemy as well as obscenity. Active groups involved were several sectional Anti-Communist study groups and Christians for Freedom.

Book Censoring Condemned

The Adult Education Council of Greater Columbus views with great concern the attempt to censor books in the Columbus schools.

The Council feels that there is nothing more communistic than censorship and 'book-burning', and that such censorship imposes on the historic American right of freedoms of the press and of speech.

Education of children in a democratic school system is based on children enjoying an opportunity to be exposed to all kinds of books to which they are guided wisely by their parents and school officials.

Columbus has been blessed with competent school leaders who understand that the minds of children must be open so that children may make wise decisions based on having learned many points of view.

To exclude books from school shelves because they express a point of view which individuals or groups disagree with is a dangerous threat to our way of life. Who is to censor the censors?—SAMUEL D. STELLMAN, President.

Columbus Anti-Communist Ordinance Unconstitutional

A Columbus, Ohio, ordinance designed to prevent the sale of Communist-made goods was ruled unconstitutional for the second time in Columbus Municipal Court on November 14. The case leading to this ruling was that of Ali Kassam Hassan Miqdadi, a dealer in old books, who was arrested May 29 for having magazines and books from Russia, China and Cuba for sale in his shop without having obtained the license the ordinance calls for (*PW*, June 17). Following the ruling, city officials announced that they will suspend enforcement of the ordinance until a higher court rules on the law.

Paul L. Selby, Jr., a law professor who heads the legal aid clinic at Ohio State and who defended Mr. Miqdadi, said, in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, that the ordinance violates the "commerce clause" of the U.S. Constitution which grants Congress the right to regulate foreign trade. He said, "If the Columbus City Council finds that the foreign policy of the United States is not conducted to its satisfaction, the remedies lie within the nation's political structure, and not in the construction of a competing foreign policy to govern the city's foreign trade."—*PW*, 25 November.

Setback for U.S. in Red Mail Dispute

Federal Judge Alfonso J. Zirpoli refused on 24 October to dismiss a case challenging the Government's right to intercept certain Communist propaganda from abroad. In the process, he had some harsh things to say about the Government's recent strategy for dealing with the plaintiff in the case, Leif Heilberg, a 30-year-old San Francisco toolmaker and Esperanto scholar.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California initiated his action last July after postal authorities threatened to destroy a Red Chinese publication printed in Esperanto. Heilberg, a Danish citizen, said he hadn't solicited the mail. He asserted that he

was entitled to receive it without complying with a requirement that he supply notification of his interest in getting it.

Judge Zirpoli said there was "a substantial constitutional question" to be decided and that the case would be referred for hearing by a three-judge panel. His ruling came after Assistant United States Attorney Charles E. Collett asked for dismissal of the case on grounds that it was moot.

Any dispute between Heilberg and the Government, Collett argued, was resolved at a court session last August 2 when he bluntly thrust the Chinese tract into Heilberg's hands.

Heilberg's Civil Liberties Union counsel, Marshall W. Krause, snatched the pamphlet away and left it on the courtroom lectern. It was this move by Collett that drew a sharp comment from Judge Zirpoli.

"Is the Government proposing that every time an individual comes in seeking relief it will give him what he wants and thereby make the case moot?" the judge said. "Is it going to enforce the law for the man who doesn't resist and not enforce it for the man who does resist?"

Philadelphia Branch Scores Book-Burning

The Philadelphia ACLU protested on September 30 a book-burning and boycott arranged by the Rev. W. Carter Merbreier and participated in by Police Commissioner Howard Leary and Superintendent of Public Schools Allen Wetter.

"Book-burning itself is an obnoxious symbol of intolerance and bigotry, reminiscent of Hitler and Savanarola," said the Philadelphia Branch. "It is outlandish to see the Superintendent of Public Schools—a man dedicated to education—pictured in the act of book-burning. Nor does there seem to be any excuse for the presence of the Police Commissioner at this ceremony, his job is to enforce the law, not to assist vigilantes who seek to supplant it."

The ACLU also condemned a boycott plan announced by Mr. Merbreier, whereby 5,000 persons will decide individually what publications they think are "objectionable," and then threaten book-sellers with boycott if they do not remove them from sale.

"The law provides an orderly way for dealing with alleged obscenity," local Executive Director Spencer Coxe pointed out. "Selling obscene publications is a crime. Offenders may be arrested, given a trial, and, if found guilty, punished according to due process of law."

"Citizens concerned with the effect of pornography on youth," Coxe added, "would be better advised to promote the sale and reading of good literature rather than undertake the destruction of bad. Successful 'good reading' campaigns have been carried out by parents' groups in Ohio and western Pennsylvania. Suppression merely whets the appetite for forbidden fruit."—*Civil Liberties*, November.

Another Actor

Greyhound has banned James Baldwin's *Another Country* from all its bus depot newsstands as "too sexy."—Caen, SFC, 21 October.

Book Burning in Rome

We were beginning to think that in the course of Vatican Council II the curia, the vicariate of Rome (the administrative agency for the diocese of Rome), and the Holy Office were becoming sophisticated enough to roll with the punch of embarrassments, to outsnob many kinds of criticism by aloof silence, and in general to avoid overt public recall of historically offensive Vatican behavior. But how unsophisticated it was (if the *New York Times* of September 30 is accurate) for the vicariate, with the full knowledge of the Holy Office, to notify bookstores in Rome not to "expose or sell" books like those of Xavier Rynne or Robert Kaiser or even Hans Küng! These books, said the vicariate, were unacceptable for "doctrinal reasons" and would therefore be dangerous in the hands of bishops coming to the council from faraway places. To our Protestant eyes this move was undiplomatic for many reasons. In implying that the faraway bishops may not already be familiar with these works the vicariate is fooling no one and is insulting the bishops. We have difficulty picturing a council representative who does not know the thesis of Rynne or Kaiser or Küng. Is the vicariate really that naive? Further, like all censorship of books, this move of the vicariate will only widen the circulation of those ideas, since the prohibition renders them more enticing. Any Protestant would have given Roman authorities credit for more worldly wisdom than it has shown in this case. But no, we are back to the oldtime practices. Still, there is no point in our mounting a high horse. Attempts at quiet censorship are not utterly unknown among Protestants. And no doubt Catholic critics of the Rynne-Kaiser-Küng ban will "take care of the vicariate" on their own. Free ideas will find other ways of being disseminated. The publishers of Kaiser, Rynne and Küng will have cause to rejoice. Even so, however, the long, slow, frustrating march of men in quest of full freedom has received another if minor setback, and we are just unsophisticated enough to deplore that.—*Christian Century*, 16 October.

Episcopal Diocese Censors McGill

The fact, noted above, that Roman Catholics have no monopoly on ecclesiastical censorship has, unfortunately, been corroborated once again—this time by the Episcopal diocese of Atlanta. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, that Episcopal diocese during the last week of September junked 13,000 copies of its official newspaper in which *Atlanta Constitution* Editor Ralph McGill charged the Episcopal leadership with "hypocrisy" in its relationship with the Lovett School, an Episcopal institution which refuses to admit Negro children. In an interview published in the scrapped paper McGill, an Episcopalian, is quoted as saying: "I think the Cathedral [of St. Philip] has acted with hypocrisy [in the Lovett School matter], and I think this is too bad." Later the editor of *Diocese*, Milton L. Wood, an assistant to Bishop Randolph Claiborne, Jr., prepared for distribution a censored edition deleting the controversial portion of the McGill interview. It has been rumored that the trustees of the school may have had something to do with killing McGill's statement. Four members of the diocesan paper's advisory board

—two clergymen and two laymen—protested the deletion: "Ralph McGill's courageous and visionary witness as an Episcopalian has significantly affected the climate of the South and of the nation, and has been heard throughout the world. A voice of such importance should certainly be heard within his own Episcopal Diocese." This is the nub of the matter. McGill will be heard. If he has criticisms to offer within the family, he should be heard within the family. Censorship makes the church's private affairs public and makes its leadership appear ridiculous. The remedy? Let the *Diocese* open its pages to one of the Episcopal Church's leading laymen and let him say frankly, fully and fearlessly what a devoted son wants to say.—*Christian Century*, 16 October.

Ban 2 Books at Medina

MEDINA—School officials Monday banned "Tales of Boccaccio" and Sinclair Lewis' novel, "Elmer Gantry," from a current paperback book fair at Medina High School.

They removed the books from 1,200 titles on sale in a bookmobile.

The books originally were screened by the American Library Assn. but local schools also may weed out books they consider offensive.—Akron *Beacon-Journal*, 15 October.

(ALA "screening" is a puzzlement, but reference appears to be to a pamphlet entitled "The Paperback Goes to School, 1963-64" published by the Bureau of Independent Publishers and Distributors. Its list of more than 3,000 titles was "considered for suitability to students of high and junior high school age by a Committee made up of members of the NEA and the AASL." The list includes "Elmer Gantry" but not Boccaccio.)

Censorship Pressure in Wisconsin Schools

Public pressure for censorship of books and magazines appears to be a "prominent part of school life in Wisconsin," a study supported by the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English has concluded.

About a third of the questionnaires returned by educators in the study contained evidence supporting the conclusion that "a substantial proportion of the teachers in Wisconsin feel the continuing presence of censorship pressures."

The study was made by Prof. Lee A. Burress, Jr., chairman of the English department at Stevens Point State college. His report was published in the October issue of the *Wisconsin English Journal*, the official publication of the council.

Annual Report

Fourteen hundred seventy-nine copies of this issue are being distributed on a subscription basis, an increase of 38 percent over the January, 1963 issue. Two hundred fifty-six copies have been sold in bulk to six library schools for distribution to their students studying censorship. The editor is hoping they all may be counted as subscribers beginning with the March issue.

Priest's Fast Gets Fast (Promise of) Action

The Downey, CALIFORNIA, city council on November 6 gave the local CDL permission to circulate petitions calling for the establishment of an Advisory Decent Literature Board made up of citizens. Petitions are sponsored by the Downey Coordinating Council, and 4,000 names are sought in an effort to show the city council that the people of Downey want a Decent Literature Board. Function of Board would be to ask vendors to remove alleged obscenity under threat of prosecution.

Municipal Judge Norman N. Eiger on 4 November dismissed charges of selling obscene literature, filed July 31 against Kroch's and Brentano's, Inc., and a salesman in its bookstore, at 29 S. Wabash, Chicago.

Manuel L. Port, assistant corporation counsel, told Judge Eiger the city agreed to dismiss charges because the arresting officer is now in the Army and the store has agreed to stop selling the book in question, *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, first published in 1749.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed on 18 November to hear the appeal of a Junction City, KANSAS, news service testing the constitutionality of a Kansas anti-pornography law. Case involves the 1961 seizure of 1715 copies of 31 paperback titles which the Kansas Supreme Court has ruled are trash with no literary merit. The P-K News Service appeal includes the assertion that the Junction City Public Library contains best-selling books with passages equally salacious as those the P-K firm was selling.

Federal court action to remove the threat of prosecution that has prevented sale of nearly four-score "girlie" magazines in Androscoggin County, MAINE, was instigated on 1 October in Lewiston by the Empire News Company. The complaint seeks an injunction to bar county attorney Laurier T. Raymond, Jr. from threatening it or its dealers with criminal prosecution for selling these magazines. Action stems from a May 17 letter from Raymond to the distributor in which he declared his belief such magazines to be "an illustration of indecency" under Maine's statute. The matter was resolved on October 24 in Portland at a pre-trial conference after which two petitions and the injunction against Raymond were marked "action dismissed without prejudice and without costs to either party." Raymond agreed to rely upon standards which have been set forth in U.S. Supreme Court rulings to determine if a publication is "obscene."

The NEW JERSEY Supreme Court on December 2 upheld on appeal the constitutionality of a law that requires magazine and book distributors to take back publications that retailers deem obscene. The appellant, the Hudson County News Company, contended the statute constituted a violation of freedom of the press and equal rights under the State and Federal constitutions. In his opinion, Judge Nathan L. Jacobs wrote that the law merely made mandatory a "thoroughly decent obligation."

After three days of fasting to protest widespread sales of what he calls "cesspool literature," Rev. Morton A. Hill drew an announcement on October 28 from NEW YORK Mayor Robert A. Wagner that he had named deputy mayor Edward F. Cavanaugh, Jr., to head a drive against smutty literature. Wagner also ordered city officials to confer with the fasting priest. The AP Wirephoto accompanying the story gave nationwide circulation to Hill's prime example of cesspool lit. Two days later Mayor Wagner invited city officials and clergymen to city hall on November 4 to discuss action against the sale of pornography to children. First arrests "since the city's headlined crackdown on pornography" were made in Times Square on November 1.

A bookstore clerk was found guilty of a misdemeanor on November 14 for selling a copy of *Fanny Hill* to a 16-year old girl on September 4. He and his boss were convicted for violation of the New York State Penal Law, 484-H, which prohibits sale to persons under 18 of any book that "exploits, is devoted to, or is principally made up of descriptions of illicit sex or sexual immorality." The decision, handed down by three Criminal Court judges, was written by Judge Benjamin Gassman, who was aware of but disagrees with New York State Supreme Court Judge Arthur Klein, who on August 23 ruled that the book is not obscene.

The Columbus, OHIO, list of banned books grew to 30 on October 24 with the vice squad chief's order that all copies of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Capricorn* be removed from bookstore shelves. Should a bookseller be brought into court for failure to comply, it would be up to a judge to decide whether the "obscene" label is accurate, according to city attorney John Young, who had not read the book. Only other title on the list of 30 to be revealed at this time is James Baldwin's *Another Country*. Vice Squad chief George Watts said most of the books on the banned list were "plain smut," removed from bookshelves "quietly" since the local ordinance went into effect. "It's just when a well known author is involved that it gets publicity."

A verdict of 30 days imprisonment and a \$1,000 fine was reported by a Knoxville, TENNESSEE, criminal court jury on October 18 in convicting newsstand operator Robert A. Werner of dealing in obscene literature, 17 'girlie' magazines being the cases in point. A motion for a new trial was immediately entered by defense attorneys. The case is notable in that CDL chief counsel Charles H. Keeting assisted in the prosecution, and Los Angeles attorney Stanley Fleishman, representing the publishers, assisted in the defense. The conviction does not mean that Werner has to cease sale of these types of nudist and girlie magazines, but he could be prosecuted on future offenses, if any. If you think that's double-talk, so does the editor.

A second attempt was made in Antigo, WISCONSIN, on September 11 to pass a model obscenity statute, but the common council settled for a resolution which is a model in itself: "Be it resolved . . . that the common council of the City of Antigo does vigorously support and uphold all enforceable state statutes relative to all obscene literature, pictures, drawings, sketches and paintings found within the city limits which are offered for resale. . . ."

Canada Relaxes Barrier

According to officials of the Department of National Revenue, formerly charged with the responsibility of passing or banning obscene books, the border is now wide open. Since the Liberal Government took office in April, it is understood that no books have been denied entry at any border point.

This new laissez-faire policy is, however, dependent on the high courts. If a book is ruled obscene by the Supreme Court of Canada, it will be banned from entry.

The Supreme Court is believed to have passed judgment on only one book in its history. This is D. L. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. It was declared not obscene by the court and has been on sale across Canada for several years.

Censorship, then has been taken from the senior civil servants who used to pass on books seized by customs examiners, and the ball has been tossed to the high court.

Department officials say the new policy is extended to books considered hard-core pornography as well as merely controversial ones, and to book-selling companies as well as individuals.

In other words, any company wishing to import any book for sale in Canada may do so without fear of its books being seized at the border. They may still, of course, be prosecuted for selling obscene literature.

"The definition of obscenity is there," said one official, "but no one seems to care. Until the courts ban a book, there's no sense of our doing it."

Obscenity, as defined by the Supreme Court, is the undue exploitation of sex.

Under the old policy, any customs examiner could seize any book he deemed improper. It was then sent to Ottawa where three or four senior civil servants would read it and pass judgment. If the consensus was that it was obscene, it was confiscated. Otherwise, it was returned to its owner.

The laws, of course, have not been changed. Their application has. "The department's attitude now is to be guided by a court's decision," said another official.

The new policy has been put into effect quietly. Officials have a you-didn't-ask-so-we-didn't-tell attitude about it. However, in almost seven months, no book has been seized at points of entry.—*Toronto Globe and Mail*, 7 November.

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Free in Ferguson

Ferguson's City Council has earned commendation for having the intelligence and courage to refuse to create a "decent" literature commission. As originally conceived the commission evidently would have been empowered to go into libraries and schools to inspect and condemn books, which would have been an open invitation for official meddling of the most objectionable kind. The Council cut out that provision and then quite properly decided to kill the remainder of the proposal on the theory that the dangers of censorship were greater than the alleged dangers of obscenity. This triumph of the free mind over busybodies and bookburners is a mark of the maturity and stature of the Council members and of the community they serve. If it stands as precedent for handling similar proposals in other towns, then so much the better.—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 21 October.

'Operation Pornography'

In a time that cries out for so many other major endeavors, the city has suddenly undertaken "Operation Pornography." The new crusade is aimed at the merchants of dirt. It is designed to protect the young from filthy books and pictures and is launched with a great blare of moral trumpets.

It requires no special valor for the Mayor and his aides to declare themselves against sin. Unhappily, as they well know, the problem is far more complicated than headline hysteria. For many years the highest courts in the land have been trying to define the line between pornography and literature, and their efforts have produced more confusion than clarity.

The danger in this new frenzy—touched off by the hunger strike of a Jesuit priest backed by a rabbi and a Lutheran minister—is that difficult, elusive problems of definition will be placed in the hands of politicians and police officers not notably equipped for a mission that has confounded our ablest judges.

The Mayor has pledged that this campaign to protect children from evil stuff will avoid "any extension of censorship beyond existing legal limits." But this is small reassurance when the men entrusted with this literary sanitation drive are so visibly lacking in any special competence to make subtle and significant distinctions.

Who will fix the standards for this new crusade? Who will prevent a wave of vigilanteism?

There are existing procedures for dealing with smut-peddlers where the offense is so clear and flagrant that there can be no valid argument. But to dignify this effort with the cry "Operation Pornography" and to make this a high-priority business of the city is to yield to know-nothingism. A few kids may have been hurt by some of the junk they read. But we suspect there was larger wisdom in the late Mayor Walker's remark that no girl was ever ruined by a book. We further suggest that far more children are damaged in Our Town by the deprivation and inequities of under-privileged existence than by filthy pictures—and that these injustices would be a worthier target for the efforts of religious and civic leaders.—*New York Post*, 30 October.

Monterey Park "Friends" Draw Right-Wing Fire

Appearance of *Nation* editor Carey McWilliams as a lecturer at the Bruggemeyer Memorial Library on October 26 on the Edgar M. Cohn Memorial Lecture Series sponsored by the Friends of the Library was protested by several Monterey Park, California, citizens, including Al Cook, Chairman of a recently organized Monterey Park Americanism Center. Reason for protest was the fact that McWilliams had been accused of being a Communist before the HUAC, the accusation having been denied by McWilliams. Title of McWilliams' address: "The Need for Dissent in American Society." The local press reports no protest of the appearance of Frank Hollingsworth, Los Angeles County coordinator of the John Birch Society at an October 24th dinner meeting of District 11 of the California State Junior Chamber of Commerce in Monterey Park.

The Best Defense . . .

The National Council of Teachers of English, meeting in San Francisco November 9, endorsed the California State Board of Education's resolution against censorship passed at the height of the *Dictionary of American Slang* controversy: "Any pressure to restrict the choice of local schools, or to remove books from local school libraries, should be resisted, whether the pressure comes from local groups espousing a particular point of view or from State officials." Noting that "un-critical censorship of books continues in many parts of the United States," the Council directed that copies of its resolution, incorporating the California statement, be sent to boards of education in all 50 states.

The monthly Ontario, California, community forum devoted its October 23rd meeting to a panel discussion of censorship in the Art Exhibit room of the Ontario City Library. The question to which six panelists addressed five minute presentations was "Should any book be censored out of publication on political, sociological, religious, or other basis?" Program provided for twenty minutes of discussion among the panelists, followed by written and oral questions from the audience. The panel included a newspaper reporter, a junior college Dean of Instruction, a realtor, a probation officer, County Supervisor, and Homer Fletcher, librarian of the Arcadia Public Library.

Highlight of the FLORIDA CLU Workshop at Sarasota on October 5 was a panel discussion, "Censorship, Obscenity and the Freedom to Read," at which MacKinlay Kantor regaled the audience with accounts of incidents of censorship encountered in his career as an author. Kantor said he encounters various types of censorship even from letter carriers who reprimand him for having his picture taken smoking a pipe because the pipe smoking might exert an evil influence on the young. He said he had no intention of waging war against the censors because, "If I spent all my time crusading against censorship, I'd never get any books written." Could be there is a moral here for the editor.

Genesee County, MICHIGAN, prosecutor Robert F. Leonard on September 19 called for a community effort to help rid newsstands of "obscene and pornographic" literature. The citizens committee he appointed had its first meeting the following day, and there followed a normal CDL pattern of intimidation of local news dealers and the arrest of several newsstand owners on charges of obscenity. Notable in the case is the action of the Flint Library Club in publicly expressing its concern in an open letter to prosecutor Leonard stating the Club believes there are legal means to handle the problem and that "there is always a danger that an extra-legal citizens group may easily take upon itself other types of censorship." Leonard did not acknowledge the letter. Flint Television Station WJRT on October 20 devoted its regular half-hour program called "In Our Opinion" to a panel discussion of the problem. Included on the panel was William R. Elgood, VP of the Flint Library Club.

Amidst a spate of news stories about local and state PTA groups devoting their time and talent to CDL-type censorship activity, it is refreshing indeed to read that the 66th Annual Convention of the NEW YORK State Congress of Parents and Teachers on October 23rd unanimously adopted a resolution designed to safeguard the right to read. Sponsored by the Levittown, Long Island, delegation, which expressed concern over the rash of attacks last year to control school books on Long Island, the resolution says that the Congress will "seek the informed support of its members to insure the students' right to read and to encourage schools to enact a program of action to establish a community climate in which informed local citizens may be encouraged to safeguard this right of students to read under the guidance of school administrators, teachers and professional librarians."

The Waco, TEXAS, public library during October offered a special display of banned books to its patrons. Included among the 23 titles were *Alice in Wonderland*, *Green Pastures*, *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, and *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Said librarian Lee Brawnner, "Though the reasons for the prohibitions may sometimes be obscure to us today, they nevertheless reflected the prejudices of either author or state or church or interested group."

Busman's Holiday

When Barney Rosset, publisher of Grove Press, was in Europe last month to attend the Frankfurt Book Fair, he found himself on something of a busman's holiday. From Frankfurt, he traveled to Varese, Italy, to testify in defense of Jack Kerouac's novel, *The Subterraneans*, published in Italy by Feltrinelli but banned since 1961. The Italian court ruled in favor of the book and lifted the ban. On the same day he testified in Varese, Mr. Rosset originally had been scheduled to appear in a Brooklyn court for a censorship hearing on Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*. The Brooklyn hearing now has been postponed to February 11.—PW, 25 November.

Pornography and Panic

The Senate District Committee, now holding hearings on the omnibus crime bill for the District of Columbia, ought to take a particularly careful and searching look at the section of the bill authorizing prior censorship and seizure of publications alleged to be indecent. The House passed the bill without so much as a hearing on this censorship provision. It is a provision aimed at pornography; but it hits the very heart of the first freedom—freedom of expression.

Pornography is pernicious as well as unpleasant. Therefore, the District Code has a section enacted in 1901 which makes it a penal offense to sell, give away, exhibit or advertise any “obscene, lewd or indecent book, pamphlet, drawing, engraving, picture, photograph, instrument, or article of indecent or immoral use . . .” In the customary American manner, this section defines a crime and subjects anyone to indictment, trial and punishment for committing it.

The measure passed by the House would punish first and prove the offense subsequently. It would permit a judge—a single judge acting without notice, without a hearing and without any showing by the Government of irreparable injury—to issue a temporary restraining order valid for ten days against the sale, gift, exhibition or distribution of allegedly offensive material. This means that a single judge, acting without benefit of any argument against the Government’s request, could forbid a newspaper article to be published or a broadcast to be made for a period of ten days. By the end of that period a publication or broadcast could lose all point and timeliness.

But this is not all. The temporary restraining order could be followed by a preliminary injunction authorizing seizure of the offensive material. The preliminary injunction could be followed, after a civil trial without a jury, by a permanent injunction which would require destruction of the material, forbid use of any printing presses, transmitters or other real property to violate the statute and which might, in addition, authorize confiscation of all this property.

No wonder the minority report in the House District Committee declared: “The very existence of a law like section 507 would serve to choke off free expression of ideas.” Only a very reckless publisher or broadcaster would dare so much as to mention sex!

We believe this censorship is plainly and patently unconstitutional—at variance with the whole concept of free expression. We believe, besides, it runs directly counter to the public interest and to sound public policy, depriving the public of much it legitimately needs and wants to know for the sake of protecting it from a small percentage of filth. We believe it violates sound principles of law, allowing punishment before proof of guilt and putting in the hands of a single judge power to silence speech and suppress publication.

Pornography is a nuisance, a headache. Existing law affords a reasonable means of dealing with it. But it is folly for a community to try to deal with it by cutting off its own head.—*Washington Post*, 4 November.

That Dictionary

Sequoia Union High School District (San Carlos, California) on October 17 authorized limited use of the *Dictionary of American Slang* in the six schools under its jurisdiction, “limited use” being defined as written permission from a teacher. Mrs. Jane Alexander, San Carlos housewife termed the board’s action an outrage and said she might charge trustees with contributing to delinquency of minors. Mrs. Alexander was the leader of some 40 persons who voiced strong objections to the book and circulated mimeographed excerpts at the trustees’ meeting.

Frank H. Garcia threatened on October 29 to picket the San Leandro, California, city hall unless the city bows to his demands and removes the dictionary from the community library. Garcia, who has not read the book, bases his demand upon the well-publicized opinion of state superintendent of public instruction Max Rafferty. The city council referred him to the library board of trustees.

Obscenity and Relativity

Where does 18th century “Fanny Hill” stand before the law in New York?

According to City Criminal Court Judges Gassman, Silver and Impellitteri this is an obscene novel that cannot be sold to any one under age 18. A new state law makes it a misdemeanor to merchandise to the youthful any book that “exploits, is devoted to, or is principally made up of descriptions of illicit sex or sexual immorality.”

But it was only last August that State Supreme Court Justice Klein ruled that venerable “Fanny Hill” couldn’t be banned under the long-standing Section 22-A prohibiting distribution of any publication “of an indecent character, which is obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, indecent or disgusting.” He said the book wasn’t obscene by current standards.

The objective of both laws is the same, except that the former seeks to protect those of tender years. Yet both laws suffer from the same disability of how to define obscenity. Even the U. S. Supreme Court has concluded only this: “The test is whether to the average person applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest.”

It is all very well to say that the average person knows what is obscene, but this is one of those shibboleths that won’t bear close examination. For while there is undoubtedly a general agreement on what constitutes hard-core dirt, the feeling about obscenity varies according to individual judgment and according to time’s context.

The public must be able to defend itself against the filth-peddlers, and indeed it can, but let us also be careful not to turn into a nation of book-burners. This is a remarkably tolerant era; the insufficiently recognized danger is that of excess in the opposite direction.

Fight smut, yes, but in the zeal for teen-agers (who’ll find “Fanny Hill” anyway, if they care) it would be well to preserve an intelligent sense of proportion. This world, after all, contains a great many other and bigger problems.—N. Y. *Herald Tribune*, 16 November.

Predictably Miller

In order for the prospective purchaser to know what he would be getting for his money, the contents of the book* are here summarized: an introduction by the publisher Emil White; the opinion rendered by District Judge Louis Goodman (September 17, 1951) concerning importation into the United States of Miller's "Tropics"; a letter to Henry Miller from Trygve Hirsch, Barrister at Law in Oslo, Norway, who was to defend one of the bookshop keepers charged there in 1957 for selling "Sexus"; Henry Miller's reply to Mr. Hirsch, also a further reply to an intervening letter not reproduced here; an article by L. Yakovlev, "The Literature of Decay," which appeared in the June 1950 "Soviet Literature" (official organ of the Moscow Writers' Union); the summation of Lord Chief Justice Wold in the Supreme Court of Norway, also the dissenting opinion of Judge Thrap; the testimony in favor of Miller at the Norway trial, entitled "Henry Miller, 'Pornographer or Prophet'", by Peter P. Rohde; an essay by Albert Maillet called "Henry Miller, Superman and Prophet"; and a section of 17 pages of rather good black and white pictures of Henry Miller, his family and house, Big Sur, etc.

It is altogether an intriguing assortment, of varying usefulness and quality. The legal documents, easily available here and hard to obtain otherwise, may be of special interest to anyone investigating the trials of books and authors, and the formal legal opinion handed down. The essays, too, might be hard to trace down in their original publications, and are valuable to anyone collecting critical opinion on Miller.

Perhaps the best things in the book are Miller's two letters, really essays containing explanation of his life, ideas and works, as well as his theories about censorship. In the first letter, he points out that critics who find parts of a book objectionable should attempt to establish the author's integrity; he defends his own integrity by trying to explain something of the creative process as it works with him ("In writing I follow my nose; 'it' decides, not me."), describing his writing as an attempt to portray the whole man and the society which fostered him. He sees the issue of book censorship as only one aspect of a larger question, "what is freedom?" He also makes the ultimately damning point against censorship, that it doesn't work.

The second letter (which the editor says has been published separately under the title "Defense of the

Controversial Dictionary

During the height of the controversy involving the *Dictionary of American Slang* this past summer the Los Angeles City Council adopted a motion calling upon the City Attorney and the Chief of Police to investigate the book as it related to possible violations of the law. The furor over the dictionary has passed into the 1963 files of "Summer Madness," but it is worth noting that the Los Angeles City Council adopted, without comment, the following report from its Police, Fire, and Civil Defense Committee on September 20:

"We have received reports from the Chief of Police and the City Attorney relative to the *Dictionary of American Slang* advising that said book does not violate the California State Statutes pertaining to obscenity . . . and we recommend, pending further efforts of the State Legislature to revise California's anti-obscenity law, that the matter be filed."—*Operation LAPL*, October.

Freedom to Read") describes him as a dissenter, "out of line" with society, who is not too surprised to learn that the Norway court has judged him obscene. He repeats his positive philosophy of life, and his earlier point that the unfavorable decision will not hinder the circulation of his book.

Miller's emphatic defense of the freedom to read is suggested by some of the concluding sentences: "You cannot eliminate an idea by suppressing it, and the idea which is linked with this issue is one of freedom to read what one chooses. Freedom, in other words, to read what is bad for one as well as what is good for one—or, what is simply innocuous. How can one guard against evil, in short, if one does not know what evil is?"

These two letters are typical Miller, at his best and worst. They show, I think, his sincerity (even integrity) and his refreshing, yea-saying philosophy; but also his sometimes muddled thinking and a sometimes aggravating cocksureness of his own authority and mission.

The Russian essay is predictably anti-Miller: "In a country where books are written and appraised by the people, the writings of the Henry Millers would be branded as the ravings of a madman with a graphomaniacal bent." The French offering is (perhaps just as predictably) pro-Miller: "The true Christians are those who, like Miller, have succeeded in elevating themselves to the level of Christ—who have become Christs themselves, because they have the same vision of the world." (This essay abounds in quotations from the Bible, along with many from Miller.) Even those who consider Miller neither a madman nor a Messiah may see some merit in the case made so emotionally by M. Maillet.

Although the book is overpriced and rather weakly engineered (not durable for library circulation, for example), it is essential for inclusive collections on Henry Miller, desirable for inclusive collections on censorship, and very interesting to Miller admirers, one of whom is obviously Emil White.—Lois Huish, Contra Costa County Library.

**Henry Miller—Between heaven and hell: a symposium*. Edited and published by Emil White. Big Sur, c1961. illus. 102p. \$2.25 (paperbound)

New IFC Chairmen

Mr. Clifford Wightman, Director, Muskegon Public Library, is chairman of the IFC of the Michigan Library Association.

Mrs. Alice L. Hicks, Reference Librarian of the Women's College at Duke University is chairman of the IFC of the North Carolina Library Association.

Mr. Richard W. Robbins, Librarian of the Pawtucket Public Library is chairman of the IFC of the Rhode Island Library Association.

Along with our sincere welcome goes the hope they will keep the *Newsletter* informed of their activities.

FCC vs. Pacifica

The FCC inquiry into the political background of the Pacifica Foundation, operator of three listener-supported FM radio stations, was revealed on November 8 to include a questionnaire to foundation board members and station managers to determine whether any of them are or have ever been Communists. Following a meeting in Berkeley on November 9, the PF Board of Directors expressed "full confidence in the integrity, honesty and loyalty" of its executives and staff members. They stated that they were preparing a petition in response to the FCC questionnaire, on the basis of which, plus the record of operation, "We are confident the FCC will conclude that we operate in the public interest and necessity."

Former Editor Responds to Mrs. McKeeth

I suspect that you will receive many letters (This is the only one. Ed.) in response to your invitation to comment on the letter of Mrs. McKeeth which appeared in the November *Newsletter*. Mrs. McKeeth raises some profound questions as well as some trivial issues. She is obviously very sincere, and what I have to say is not meant to ridicule her or her beliefs, in any way.

First, do we have any definite set of "responsibilities" for all public libraries? as Mrs. McKeeth seems to imply. Given the local or regional basis of most public libraries, one would expect that the "responsibilities" of each would reflect the community which supported it. Thus, some communities might well expect their libraries to "protect" them from a knowledge of life as it is. And why not, if the majority of the community so desires? But to expect that all libraries will have the same responsibilities is too much. However, let us hope that library responsibilities will be determined by a majority of any community, and not merely by an obstreperous minority.

Second, just what is "learning and understanding on a higher, more advanced, more respected plane"? Mrs. McKeeth expects us all to understand the meaning of her phrase in exactly the same way as she understands it. But we do not all have the same background as she. Thus, our understanding can never be quite the same as hers. But throughout her letter she uses words and phrases as if all men, everywhere, can agree precisely on the meaning of such terms as "moral depravity," "psychological depravity," and "animalistic insanity." Mrs. McKeeth may not be aware that the term insanity is used formally only in law, and never in psychiatry.

Third, what does the *Dictionary of American Slang* do to improve an individual?, she asks. Has Mrs. McKeeth read the fascinating and scholarly introduction to that *Dictionary*? That introduction could certainly increase the knowledge of anyone interested in living language, and I doubt that it (i.e., the Introduction) could corrupt even the most corruptible of men (or children). One might also ask Mrs. McKeeth if she has objective evidence of either the "wholesome nourishment or poison for the mind" having been provided to *anyone* through books? A good many of the tenets of librarianship are based on faith, not knowledge. (I do not mean to imply that this is, necessarily, bad.)

Finally, Mrs. McKeeth did not tell us what is her definition of "intellectual freedom." But I will tell her

mine: "the freedom of any person, who is legally able to vote, to select and read any printed matter whatsoever, and espouse any opinion, provided that he does not attempt to force his beliefs, by threat or physical violence, on any other person." If a person, by *overt* action shows that he has been harmed by something he has read, then there are legal remedies to be had.

Obviously there are many in this country and abroad who are afraid to learn of the broad spectrum of life around them. They are welcome to remain in ignorance themselves, but they have no right to keep in ignorance those who would learn of life—provided that these latter have reached their legal majority. I have always felt that libraries, to the best of their abilities, ought freely to provide the means for learning (i.e., books). That is a personal opinion, and I may be outvoted on this stand, but I will never be dissuaded from it.—Donald V. Black.

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