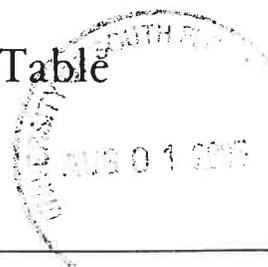


SRRT Newsletter

A Publication of the Social Responsibilities Round Table
of the American Library Association



December 1996

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FROM THE COORDINATOR

Dear SRRT members,

I'm happy to announce that we now have a listserv, SRRTAC-L, for SRRT Action Council members. If all goes according to plan, this should help us keep in touch between conferences and make it easier to raise and discuss issues. Please note that this is a listserv limited to SRRT Action Council members. We've had several folks suggest that we consider setting up a general, open subscription listserv for all SRRT members. This could be a possible agenda item for Midwinter, which leads me to ...

Our new Midwinter schedule. As we discussed at Annual, we're going to try to consolidate the number of meetings held at ALA, to increase communication among SRRT task forces, and to avoid the conflict between ALA Council and our second Action Council meeting. Thus, we will have a combined All Task Force meeting/Action Council I on Saturday, February 15, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm; Action Council II will be held on Monday, February 17, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.

Here's how the All Task Force meeting/Action Council I will run: the All Task Force meeting runs from 9:30 to 11:00, followed immediately by Action

Council I from 11:00 to 12:30. We will meet in the Grand Ballroom of the Renaissance Hotel, which has been described as a "huge" room. Two parts of the ballroom will be partitioned off for the TFOE and the GLBTF, which require more space than the one or two tables allotted for the other task forces. We were unable, though, to get a head table for the GLBTF space. So GLBTF will have "audience" seating, which I hope isn't too much of an inconvenience. Otherwise, I think we're all set for our experiment.

The following Task Forces have decided to participate and schedule one of their meetings during this slot: Poverty Task Force, International Relations Task Force, Feminist Task Force, Alternatives in Print, Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Task Force, and the Task Force on the Environment.

As always, check your ALA program for meeting locations and schedule changes. And if you have agenda items, please get them to me by January 15, 1997.

Look forward to seeing you in DC!

--Wendy Thomas, SRRT Coordinator

TASKFORCE AND AFFILIATE NEWS

ALTERNATIVES IN PRINT



Lots of things are happening at AIP! In fact the whole amoeba has multiplied by dividing ...

Margaret (Peggy) D'Adamo, Media/Materials Librarian at Johns Hopkins University, has volunteered to be co-coordinator for the SRRT Action Council and libraries/librarians side of AIP, while **Charles Willett** becomes co-coordinator for the booth, publishers, booksellers, and publications side. Peggy's address is: Johns Hopkins University Libraries, 111 Market Place, Suite 310, Baltimore, MD 21214; telephone: (410) 659-6256; fax: (410) 659-6266; mdadamo@welchlink.welch.jhu.edu.

Her home address is: 5502 Fair Oaks Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21214; telephone: (410) 426-8162; e-mail: mad%ccp@mcimail.com. Peggy has joined ALA and SRRT in order to take on this task. She is also active in SLA and was for many years an indexer for the *Alternative Press Index*, where her brother-in-law, **Charles (Chuck) D'Adamo**, is a coeditor. At future ALA conferences, Peggy will represent AIP at Action Council meetings, so Charles Willett can help staff the exhibit booth.

The Jackie Eubanks Memorial Award jury invites nominations for next year's award. **Sandy Berman** has rotated off the jury this year and **Chris Dodge** has come on. **Byron Anderson**, the new chair, and **Steve Harris** remain on the jury. Please send nominations as soon as possible to Byron Anderson, Head of Reference, Northern Illinois University Libraries, DeKalb, IL 60115; telephone: (815) 753-9850; fax: (815) 753-2003; banderson@niu.edu.

The award is presented annually to a single individual:

To recognize outstanding achievement in promoting the acquisition and use of alternative materials in libraries. Such achievement may take the form of, but is not limited to: review and essay writing; public speaking; programming; compiling bibliographies; professional association activities; and organizing events.

Previous winners have been **Noel Peattie** and **Chris Dodge**.

Byron Anderson is completing work on a new edition of our directory, to be available in January 1997:

Alternative Publishers of Books in North America, American Library Association, Social Responsibilities Round Table, Alternatives in Print Task Force, Byron Anderson, compiler. 3rd edition, revised and enlarged, with a listing of new titles. Gainesville, FL : CRISES Press, c1997. ca 110 pages. ISBN 0-9640119-5-6 (pbk: acid-free), \$20.00.

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Editor: Carol Reid
Assistant Editor: Ian Duckor
Editorial Board: Carolynne Myall, Mark Rosenzweig, Madeleine Tainton

DEADLINE FOR MAR 1997 ISSUE: 21 FEB 1997

It will completely update the 1995 second edition, add about thirty new alternative publishers, and include for the first time the titles of 1996 and 1997 imprints as a selection tool. We hope to continue to publish *APBNA* indefinitely as a biennial directory. Five hundred copies of the 2nd edition were distributed.

Also appearing in January 1997 will be the first issue of the alternative review journal:

Counterpoise: the review journal for social responsibilities, liberty, and dissent, v. 1, no. 1. Gainesville, FL : American Library Association, Social Responsibilities Round Table, Alternatives in Print Task Force; Charles Willett, editor. January-March 1997, quarterly. USA: institutions, \$35/year; individuals, \$25/year; students and retired people: \$15/year. Foreign, surface mail: add \$5.00; airmail: add \$15.00.

More than twenty librarians and others active with the alternative press have volunteered to be associate editors for this ambitious project, including international area representatives in Australasia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. They are joined by a large number of reviewers. Editor Charles Willett visited ALA headquarters in October to coordinate plans with associate director **Mary Ghikas**, OLOS administrative assistant **Sheila Page**, and others.

"The most crucial element in any classification system," Willett says, "is the choice of the first variable. In our capitalist society, mainstream review journals take money as their first variable: is this work written, published, or produced by or about people or institutions with money; does it discuss issues that concern them in ways they approve of; and will it sell? *Counterpoise* approaches new titles from more ethical perspectives: to what extent does this work promote social responsibilities or liberty or dissent?"

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Counterpoise

1716 SW Williston Road

Gainesville, FL 32608-4049

Publishers of English-language books, periodicals, zines, and non-print materials are invited to send two copies of 1995 and later imprints for possible review to: *Counterpoise*, 1716 Williston Road, Gainesville, FL 32608-4049.

AIP advocates the selection of materials from small and alternative press publishers and independent producers for library collections. But that is useless if libraries outsource collection development to commercial vendors, as the Hawaii state public library system has just contracted to do for five years with Baker & Taylor. In response to this disturbing news, AIP has established an Acquisitions Committee "to review and advise on all matters of ordering and supplying alternative library materials."

The members of the Committee are: **Patricia (Pat) Wallace** (chair), Sanford Berman, Margaret D'Adamo, Chris Dodge, **Earl Lee**, and Charles Willett. Pat Wallace, a Montessori school teacher in Dallas with a Master of Arts in sociology, a Master of Education in early childhood education, and 22 years teaching experience, is currently obtaining a Master of Library and Information Science degree at Texas Women's University at Denton. She welcomes any information about the Hawaii/B & T contract or similar outsourcing plans. Her address is: 532 Shennandoah Drive, DeSoto, TX 75115; e-mail: denwall@aol.com.

--**Peggy D'Adamo and Charles Willett**,
Coordinators

NEW REFERENCE TITLES AT THE AIP BOOTH

At Midwinter, don't miss the big display organized by the AIP Task Force at double booth #1753-55. Request catalogs and sample copies. Pick up literature about SRRT task forces. See these new, alternative reference works:

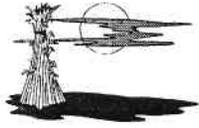
- ◆ *Counterpoise: for social responsibility, liberty, and dissent*, the alternative library-review journal. Charles Willett, editor (ALA, vol. 1- , 1997-).
- ◆ *Alternative Publishers of Books in North America*, 3rd ed., rev. and enl., with a listing of new titles. ALA/SRRT/AIP, compiled by Byron Anderson (CRISES Press, 1997).
- ◆ *Alternative Press Index* on CD-ROM, 1991-1996. Alternative Press Center (National Information Services Corporation, 1996).
- ◆ *Annotations*, the directory of periodical publishers indexed in the *Alternative Press Index* (APC, 1996).

IF IFFY ON RAP RAP

Sandy Berman, our new liaison to the ALA Intellectual Freedom Round Table, writes:

"Nothing to report yet on the intellectual freedom scene except that our IF 'leadership' has been remarkably casual and unhelpful in response to my plea for guidance regarding rock and rap CDs: i.e., whether copying the Tipper Gore warning label into the cat or bib record violates ALA's labeling policy and whether it's censorious and barbaric to buy expurgated 'clean' CD versions of Gangsta Rap, etc. when the original, unsanitized versions are also available and the bleeped editions are really produced to get radio air time for the recordings so buyers will go to record shops and purchase the original versions. That make any sense?"

ENVIRONMENT



TFOE IN NEW YORK

The Task Force on the Environment had a very successful slate of activities in New York. First and foremost was a well-attended program called "Environmentally and Socially Responsible Business." **Terry Link** <link@pilot.msu.edu> of Michigan State University, assembled an impressive cadre of speakers from the investment community to describe involvement by the business and investment communities in monitoring environmental and social track records of corporations. Speakers included **Albert Wilson** (Vice President for TIAA/CREF), **Alice Tepper Marlin** (President for the Council on Economic Priorities), **Peter Kinder** (partner with Kinder, Lydenberg, and Domini), and **Dr. Richard Lowry** (president of Peter Lowry and vice president of Good Money, Inc.). It was cosponsored by ALA's Business Reference and Services Section (BRASS).

This program drew a good and enthusiastic audience of more than 80 people. The idea was developed by Terry Link in response to his reflections on a number of recent issues. "Environmental concerns with corporate performance took center stage after the Exxon Valdez incident," Terry stated in the proposal for this program. "This incident, followed shortly thereafter by the Union Carbide Bhopal accident, helped to create the 'Valdez Principles'--a set of principles meant to guide corporations in acting responsibly toward the environment," Terry elaborated in his introduction to the program.

The Valdez Principles were expanded and renamed the CERES Principles. For more information, see: <<http://www.pader.gov/dep/deputate/pollprev/ceres/PRINCIPL.htm>>. CERES, or the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies is a coalition of investors, public pension trustees, foundations, labor unions, and environmental, religious, and public interest groups who believe that globally sustainable economic activity must be environmentally responsible. An excellent overview of these principles is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection at <<http://www.pader.gov/dep/deputate/pollprev/ceres/ceres.htm>>.

The speakers addressed the following questions:

What determines whether a company operates in an environmentally friendly or socially responsible manner?

How do research organizations track corporate performance in these areas?

How do librarians and their users obtain this information?

Their answers gave rise to frank discussions which examined business and consumer roles and responsibilities in light of complicated issues that motivate or drive us to purchase goods and obtain services. These responsibilities were examined as a series of often competing values involving not only the environment, but other social issues, such as nonviolence, community economics and well-being, and personal and global responsibilities.

Peter Kinder provided program attendees with a very useful handout--a reprint of a fact sheet entitled, "Some Resource Materials on Socially Responsible Investing and Fiduciary Duties," which is available from his office at: Kinder, Lydenberg, and Domini,

and Co., Inc., 129 Mt. Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; phone: (617) 547-7479.

Terry Link also furnished a very comprehensive and helpful guide to relevant literature and web sites at: http://www.lib.msu.edu/publ_ser/tpl/tests/ala.htm. This site affords access to a wide array of extremely useful web sites in the areas of business and the environment, socially responsible business, and other investment and financial topics.

Later in the week, TFOE sponsored a tour of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Library. This was the first opportunity for TFOE to work with the EPA, and the Task Force was glad to engage EPA and contractor staff in putting on this special introductory and inaugural program. The open house was held in the Region 2 office of the EPA at their new facilities on the 16th floor of the Federal Building at 290 Broadway, near City Hall in lower Manhattan.

The afternoon's events included tours of the year-old library, kibitzing with colleagues, and a staff demonstration of Internet-accessible environmental resources. More than forty people took time away from the Javits Conference Center and midtown hotels, where many of the ALA meetings and programs were being held, to establish contacts and increase networking and outreach activities with the EPA Library Network.

The library tour and refreshments were sponsored by Garcia Consulting, Inc., which holds a major contract for the outsourcing of nearly all EPA library services and operations. Most attending the open house took full advantage of a trip up to the 30th floor on the one-year-old building to enjoy a breathtaking wrap-around view of New York.

For those TFOE, SRRT, or ALA members not able to take part in this tour, the EPA Region 2 Library is within easy walking distance of many New York sights and scenes, including the World Trade Center, City Hall, Chinatown, SoHo, Battery Park, and Little Italy. Next time you're downtown, you might want to check it out. You can call the EPA Library in advance for an appointment to visit this environmental treasure.

The afternoon's speakers included **Jonda Byrd**, manager of the EPA Library Network; **Karen G. Schneider**, director, Region 2 Library; and **Vivian Milczarski**, senior reference librarian. During conversations with Jonda Byrd and Karen Schneider after this event, it was hoped that a relationship and dialogue between the EPA Library Network and TFOE will continue to grow over time. Readers are encouraged to take a look at the new and improved EPA home page <<http://www.epa.gov>> and to look at the pages devoted to the EPA Libraries.

TFOE BUSINESS MEETING

At the TFOE business meeting, a budget of \$3,000 was submitted to SRRT and approved.

The TFOE Resolution for the Use of Non-Chlorine Bleached Paper was brought to the floor for discussion before final presentation to SRRT at the 1997 Midwinter Meeting in Washington, D.C. Terry Link has volunteered to usher this resolution through its final phases of development.

Communications (and the lack thereof) was another topic of discussion. TFOE (and other task forces represented under SRRT) are in dire need of improved communication with OLOS and ALA. The development of a web site for TFOE was discussed, as was the need for creating an online TFOE newsletter.

Patty Owen (Hudson Branch director, Pasco County Public Library, Florida) continues to pursue the creation of a Children's Environmental Book Award and will prepare a detailed proposal for submission to SRRT at the 1997 Midwinter Meeting. Her outline will include criteria for the award as well as selection of judges, and a timeline for the inaugural presentation of the award.

Fred Stoss (associate librarian in the Science and Engineering Library at SUNY Buffalo) was asked to remain on as chair/coordinator of TFOE for an additional year. In accepting this challenge he stated that improved communications with OLOS and ALA and the creation of a TFOE newsletter would be his major objectives.

TFOE AT MIDWINTER '97

Washington, D.C., in the winter after a Presidential election is a sight to behold. The entire city is a bustle of energy and activities. As with any visit to our nation's capital, there is always plenty to do: museums, galleries, theaters, and restaurants. TFOE members attending this year's Midwinter might want to plan for some time to visit the Headquarters Library of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the Waterside Mall at 401 M Street. The Headquarters Library serves as the hub of the EPA Library Network. In addition to the Headquarters Library, there are two other EPA information entities worth visiting or with whom contacts might be made: the Public Information Center (PIC), which is the EPA's primary interface with the public, including K-12 information initiatives; and the United Nation's Environment Programme INFOTERRA, for which the Headquarters serves as the U.S. node for this international information resource sharing program. Details about the EPA Library Network and INFOTERRA can be obtained from the EPA home page <<http://www.epa.gov>>.

In the past, TFOE has not had an opportunity for program planning at the annual Midwinter meeting. The inclusion of an All Task Force event at this year's Midwinter Meeting will provide TFOE with a unique opportunity to discuss the Task Force's role within ALA, among its members, and in the community of other librarians interested in the environment. TFOE will hold an informal discussion group at this year's Midwinter Meeting in Washington, D.C., Saturday, February 15, 1997, 9:30-11:00 am, as part of this All Task Force initiative.

The TFOE Discussion and Dialogue activity, "Does ALA Need a Task Force on the Environment?" will be described in the Midwinter program booklet as follows:

"The quality of the environment remains a major concern among schools, college campuses, government agencies, corporate boardrooms, and public interest groups. The Task Force on the Environment invites librarians from all sectors to come and learn more about TFOE and why the answer to this question is a resounding YES!!! Librarians from various environmental organizations, government agencies, and other DC-area institutions have been invited to join this informal discussion about environmental issues, information resources, libraries, and the role TFOE can play in future environmental information initiatives. This informal gathering-of-the-clan is open to all librarians concerned about the environment and the roles they and their libraries can play. Attendees are encouraged to bring along handouts and brochures describing any special programs or activities they would like to share. Contact: Fred Stoss, Science and Engineering Library, SUNY Buffalo; fstoss@acsu.buffalo.edu

TFOE PRODUCES ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Working with **Anne Picker**, an M.L.S. candidate in the School of Information Science at the University of Tennessee and member of the UTK/SIS ALA Student Chapter, Fred Stoss has developed a TFOE newsletter, *GreeNotes*, which will make a late-fall debut off of the ALA web site. The complete URL will be widely distributed when the inaugural issue is completed, loaded on the ALA web site, and fully functional.

It is hoped that some form of a TFOE home page will be developed in the near future. This home page will also be attached to the ALA web site. Stay tuned for details!

--Fred Stoss

GAY, LESBIAN, AND BISEXUAL

GLBTF NEWSLETTER TO RESUME PUBLICATION

The newsletter for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Task Force (GLBTF) will resume publication by the end of the year. Newsworthy items may be forwarded to the new editor, **M. Callaghan "Cal" Zunt**, via e-mail at: mzunt@phoenix.kent.edu or by regular mail at: 3674 West 138th St., Cleveland, OH 44111-3332. Subscription and renewal requests should be addressed to the ALA/OLOS office.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

We are still accepting nominations for the GLBTF Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Book Award. The award is presented to English-language books published in the year prior to the announcement date. All books

published in December 1995 or the first eleven months of 1996 are eligible. The award, which consists of a commemorative plaque and a cash honorarium, is announced in February and presented to the winning authors or editors at a breakfast during the American Library Association Annual Conference. The award is made in two categories: Nonfiction and Literature.

Nominations for the book award may be made by any individual not affiliated with the publisher of the book being nominated. A short statement (30 to 50 words) describing why the book is being nominated must accompany the nomination, and be submitted to the Committee Chair by November 30, 1996. Snail mail must be postmarked by the nomination deadline. Nominations will be accepted by regular and electronic mail as well as by FAX. Nominations may be sent to:

John DeSantis, Chair

Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Book Award Committee
Amherst College Library
Box 2256
Amherst, MA 01002

Phone: (413) 542-2215

FAX: (413) 542-2662

E-mail: jcdesantis@amherst.edu

1997 GLB BOOK AWARD BREAKFAST

The second annual ALA Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Book Award Breakfast will take place in San Francisco on Monday, June 30, 1997.

Preparations are now underway for this event. If you are planning to attend ALA Annual in San Francisco and are interested in helping us plan for and set up for the awards breakfast, please contact either the Chair of the Breakfast Planning Subcommittee, **Joseph Eagan** at: jeagan@epf12.epflbalto.org, or the

Book Awards Committee Chair, John DeSantis at: jcdesantis@amherst.edu, or come to the planning meeting at ALA Midwinter in Washington on Sunday, February 16 at 10:00 am (location to be announced).

--Cal Zunt

HUNGER, HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

The Annual Conference program "Poor People and Libraries: What's the Connection?" was very well attended. **Sanford Berman** moderated the panel and noted that it was one of the few programs, if not the only one, that did not have the word "Internet" in the title. Attendees were able to hear the viewpoints of librarians and community activists on the importance of fully serving disadvantaged members of society. Many handouts, including a lengthy bibliography, were distributed.

John Buschman, an associate professor and Information Services librarian at Rider University, addressed the history of library services to the disadvantaged, and the theoretical issues involved. **Brian Kenney**, from the Public Services Support office at Brooklyn Public Library, spoke on the grant-funded program "Community Library Information Collaborative," along with the importance of making the library a vital resource in the community. **Ismael Alicea** from New York Public Library told of a program that brings books and libraries to children living in shelters. **Natalie Tyler**, a volunteer with the Fourth World Movement, showed and discussed a video on "street libraries," which bring language arts and reading to poor neighborhoods. And **Elizabeth Kellaher**, a Franciscan sister of the Atonement, talked about the importance of literacy and related a story whereby the community rallied to save the Tompkins Square branch library.

--Karen Venturella

SRRT Newsletter

POOR PEOPLE'S POLICY

In response to ALA president **Barbara Ford's** request for elaboration on the "Poor People's Policy," which **Sandy Berman** listed on a recent questionnaire asking for initiatives:

Publish the whole policy in *American Libraries*, perhaps with a few tips on local implementation from Sherry Lampman's enclosed list. [Sherry Lampman is the MN Alliance for Children's Coordinator for 1992-1995 Tax Credit Awareness Campaigns.]

Make the policy available through OLOS as a one-page sheet (like OIF's "Library Bill of Rights").

Designate OLOS as the ALA agency to coordinate and promote policy implementation, making this mandate equal to OLOS' responsibility regarding literacy and ensuring that there is adequate funding and staff to effectively address both mandates.

Instruct ALA's Washington office to actively support legislative initiatives that would contribute to reducing, if not eliminating, poverty itself (e.g., a living minimum wage, adequate welfare payments, more low-income housing, and national health insurance, all cited in the "Poor People's Policy").

Produce, through ALA Publishing Services, a policy-based leaflet or brochure, replete with resource and bibliographic citations.

Urge, as President, that the Library of Congress undertake the cataloging reforms specified in the enclosed SRRT "Resolution on Subject Headings Relating to Class and Poverty." [See September 1996 issue of *SRRT Newsletter* for text of this resolution.]

Revive OLOS' newsletter, *Empowerment*, as a vehicle for anti-poverty, pro-literacy news, ideas, and networking data.

Mount a major conference program on issues of class and poverty as serious barriers to equal and effective library use (possible speakers: Marion Wright Edelman, Rep. Bernie Sanders/VT, Rep. Major Owens/NY, Rep. Martin Olav Sabo/MN, Sen. Paul Wellstone/MN, Mollie Ivins, Jim Hightower, Rep. Maxine Waters/CA).

Request that all ALA units undertake poverty-related projects and programs.

With many thanks for caring--and acting,

Sanford Berman

UPROOTING RACISM

Letter to the editor of the *MLA* (Minnesota Library Association) *Newsletter*:

I'm now reading Paul Kivel's *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* (New Society Publishers, 1996) and shamefully realize that I should have challenged Barbara Carlson after her MLA Awards Banquet rant about crime, crack, and violence. Perhaps what she claimed concerning massive drug dealing and related mayhem was entirely true. Perhaps. But her fear-drenched screed seemed based almost wholly on what an unnamed dealer/tour guide *told* her, not on what she actually witnessed herself (which appeared to be several very stoned people in a basement). Still, assuming it *was* totally accurate, it was also seriously skewed. She spoke only and unmistakably about *Black* people. She said nothing about the fact that more White folks use drugs, especially coke, than African-Americans do. And nothing about the long-documented fact that the White U.S. Government, particularly through the CIA, has engaged in major drug trafficking, actually flooding Miami, Los Angeles, and other towns with heroin and cocaine. The impression I--and possibly others--got from her fevered remarks was that crazed

and gun-toting Black men were taking over our streets, our homes, our lives. In effect, she reinforced the most deeply rooted, pernicious, and racist stereotypes, providing even more fuel for fearing Black men. There's no doubt that drugs and crime and violence plague us. But they're not produced uniquely by Black people, although they most damagingly impact people of color and other communities rendered vulnerable by discrimination and poverty. If Carlson wasn't prepared to discuss the whole picture, including racism, government drug dealing, a less-than-livable minimum wage, jobs being exported to overseas sweatshops, growing income gaps, public wealth being stolen through corporate welfare schemes, underfunded schools and libraries, and an all-too-flimsy "safety net" being shredded with bipartisan fanfare, maybe she should have just shut up.

--Sanford Berman
Hennepin County Library
Minnetonka, MN
October 24, 1996

Editor's note: Coincidentally, I had also just begun reading the abovementioned book, with the intention of reviewing it for this newsletter, but a cooperative arrangement has since been arrived at between the *SRRT Newsletter* and *Counterpoise*, whereby we are going to pass on any review copies received here to *Counterpoise*, and then occasionally reprint and/or excerpt some of those reviews in these pages.

JOURNAL'S EMPTY GESTURE

We've recently changed the routing system here at Axe Library, so I've only just now gotten the August issue of *Library Journal*. Imagine my surprise (or lack thereof) to see the sickening editorial by Francine Fialkoff on pg. 56, where she scolds the ALA for passing a resolution in support of the American Booksellers Association. It seems that the ABA is taking some of the large publishers to court for giving huge discounts to chain bookstores, discounts that are not available to smaller independent bookstores. The result of this favoritism toward the big chain stores is that many independent bookstores are being squeezed out of existence.

Concerned about the loss of diversity, ALA recognizes that moving to a society of MacDonald's-type chain stores means a loss of variety. A world where a thousand different bookstore owners make a thousand different selections is obviously better than a dozen or so bookstore chains making selections based largely on which publishers give them the biggest discount. Not only independent bookstores are threatened, but most small presses.

Fialkoff is critical of the vote because:

1. The idea was not thought through (meaning the big publishers weren't given enough time to quash the effort).
2. The vote was an empty gesture (partly true, but it was still significant).
3. At least one of the big publishers named in the lawsuit (but unnamed in her editorial) is a friend of ALA and might get annoyed.

4. Libraries benefit from discounts, and so we are hypocritical (a false comparison--if independent bookstores got the same discounts as the big chains, there wouldn't be a lawsuit.)

Although Fialkoff thinks that ALA is guilty of a knee-jerk reaction in defending the underdog, the same could be said of *Library Journal's* knee-jerk reaction in defending the big publishers. I doubt that anyone was surprised by this editorial, since *LJ* often serves as an apologist for publishers. One might wonder how they justify the word "library" in the title of their magazine, except that it identifies the target market for their advertisers.

Frankly, this editorial is poorly thought out, full of false analogies and self-serving rationalizations. The fact is: Market censorship does exist, in spite of Ms. Fialkoff's view that "market censorship" is just marketing by another name. Her statement, "No publisher would knowingly conspire in a system that reduced its choices of what to publish" is a straw man. Obviously a publisher might conspire in a system that helped to crush his smaller competitors through restricting or even cutting off their access to markets.

Significantly reducing the number of independent bookstores, and with them the number of viable small presses, is a bad thing. ALA was right to speak up in defense of diversity.

--Earl Lee, Leonard H. Axe Library, Pittsburg (Kansas) State University

Editor's note: See the September 1996 issue of the *SRRT Newsletter* for the full text of the resolution in support of the ABA lawsuit.

SHRINKING BORDERS

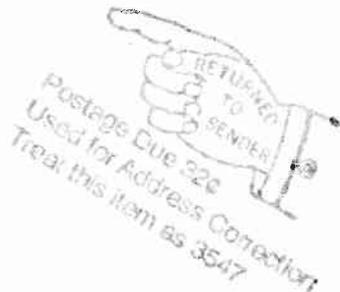
Some library Friends groups (mine, for example) offer their members personal discounts at chain bookstores, such as Borders. I would urge you to request that such groups attempt a similar arrangement with a local independent instead.

In a Philadelphia Borders bookstore, one employee was fired for union organizing, and another denied a promotion. Borders has continued to crack down on its employees by ordering them not to discuss their pay rates with each other. And in at least one store, policy regarding personal belongings has been tightened such that workers must leave their belongings in a glass case, which may only be unlocked by a manager. Complaints have been filed by the IWW and United Food and Commercial Workers Union, and support for ongoing picketing has been garnered by the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Writers Union, AFSCME, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and in some instances local book orders and other business have been withdrawn.

--Editor

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