

Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association

Prepared by Paul Bixler, Secretary

Vol. IV, No. 2

January, 1956

See Editorial, p. 2

STUDY OF MAIL RESTRICTION. The Institute of Legal Research of the University of Pennsylvania Law School has undertaken a study, financed by a grant from the Fund for the Republic, of the methods by which government agencies intercept and impound certain types of mail. Federal laws have been construed to permit seizure of matter found to be "obscene" or nonmailable "~~foreign political propaganda.~~" The Bureau of Customs cooperates with the Post Office Department in enforcing these prohibitions against mail brought into the United States from abroad.

Purpose of the Institute's project is to study the statutory authority of the federal agencies which enforce these prohibitions and to examine their operating methods. The study will go beyond mere technical legal analysis of the substance of these laws; it will seek to find out how they are being administered and interpreted at the operational level, who is being affected by their enforcement and in what way.

To obtain these data the Institute seeks information about experiences in this field from librarians, publishers, journalists, educators, research and religious organizations, and other persons or groups affected. It would like to learn the nature of such experiences, including the particular materials involved and the outcome of any proceedings seeking review of the enforcement action.

Readers who can supply information relevant to this study are asked to get in touch with Professor C. N. Paul, Institute of Legal Research, University of Pennsylvania Law School, 3400 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa. The Institute will respect requests that any portion of these replies be considered confidential.

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ONE EXAMPLE? Study of the restriction of foreign mail by the Post Office Department and the Bureau of Customs may be helpful in clearing up such anomalies as this: a "withholding" of a library subscription to the Cominform bulletin, For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy! from May, 1954 to November, 1955, during which period, for example, unrequested official items of propaganda from the Polish government arrived at the same library without any apparent hindrance. It is not certain that government agencies were the cause of this particular holding up of the Cominform bulletin (published in Bucharest). But Pravda and other Communist publications have been withheld from libraries. And this would indicate indirectly that government agencies have no easy or certain way of distinguishing between foreign Communist publications subscribed to or paid for and other foreign Communist publications distributed free and without request.

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THE PUBLISHED RECORD. The A.L.A. and its Public Libraries Division has published the Proceedings of the Work Conference on Book Selection, PLD Reporter, no. 4 (October, 1955). This 65-page publication in large format includes not only the four principal addresses of the conference but reports of individual discussion sessions, a digest of the final session, excerpts from public library book selection policy statements, selective bibliographies on book selection, and other material. \$2.50 from A.L.A., special price for quantity lots, quoted on request.

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CLIPPINGS. The Newsletter still has difficulty in getting full coverage of news. If censorship or intellectual freedom is the subject of news or comment in your local newspaper, would you please see that someone (preferably yourself) sends us a clipping of the item?

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EDITORIAL

Late in September and early in October, a number of newspapers in the Hearst chain published a column by E. F. Tompkins attacking this Newsletter as a "miscellany of leftist items, rather than a librarians' professional information sheet" and commenting in a similar vein on five items in the Newsletter. We sent a brief letter to the editors of these newspapers (so far as we have record only one published it, the Seattle Post Intelligencer); we pointed out that we try to do a reporting job in the Newsletter, and that if we take an editorial stand, we call the item an editorial. We also noted that intellectual freedom is something about which professional librarians need to keep informed.

Mr. Tompkins was unfair and lopsided in his column in exactly the manner which we try here to avoid. Calling the Newsletter "leftist" is only one example. Others are the words "commends," "disapproving," "approving" which he attaches to the treatment of the several Newsletter items. Four of these items closely followed stories we took from various newspapers and are about as "leftist" as the nation's press. The fifth was a book notice.

Undoubtedly it is difficult to keep reports about so emotionally centered a phenomenon as censorship judicious and objective. It is perhaps even more difficult to gain general acceptance of the fact that this is the aim of the Newsletter. But this is a Newsletter. (The present editorial is only the third to appear in these pages in over three years.)

Whether deliberately or not, Mr. Tompkins "misunderstood" the purpose of the Newsletter. So have other critics, not all of them from his side of the fence. The effort to be objective will continue.

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PLYMOUTH MEETING LIBRARIAN REFUSES TO TESTIFY. In a third appearance before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security (N. Y. Times, Sept. 15) Mrs. Mary Knowles, librarian at Plymouth Meeting, Pa., challenged the right of the committee to question her about Communism. In previous appearances she had invoked the Fifth Amendment.

In 1953, according to the Times, Herbert Philbrick, counter-espionage agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, had sworn that he knew Mrs. Knowles as a member of the Communist Party in 1947. In her most recent appearance before the Committee, she testified that she had not been a member of any organization on the Attorney General's subversive list for "many, many years." J. G. Sourwine, chief subcommittee counsel, suggested that "many, many years meant more than six but less than seven," to which Mrs. Knowles suggested that he make "his own interpretations."

According to the Times, she held, "in view of the fact that she was a private citizen employed by a private institution functioning under the guidance of a religious organization, the panel lacked the power of jurisdiction to question her. Further, she declined, "on jurisdictional grounds, to identify, if she could, a number of persons earlier identified as Communist functionaries or officials," The Times story continued, "She also refused to discuss the Samuel Adams school of Social Science, a Boston institution figuring large in Communist inquiry. She had been identified by witness and documents as having been the School's secretary."

Last July the Fund for the Republic awarded Plymouth Meeting Library \$5000 "for courageous and effective defense of democratic principles" in giving Mrs. Knowles permanent appointment in the face of public criticism (see Newsletter, IV: 1, p. 1).

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FROZEN FUNDS AND HEATED WORDS. After four years of successful operation, the American Heritage Project in the Los Angeles County Public Library has been opposed by a small group of individuals, and the budget for a fifth year's operation (\$3500) is now pending before the County Board of Supervisors. Opposition stems largely from the fact that the Fund for Adult Education, a creation of the Ford Foundation, granted funds for the ~~coming year's~~ operation, and from charges of "leftist" made last year by the Special Committee (Rep. Carroll Reece, chairman) investigating foundations and echoed by the opposition group. The whole disagreement was fully aired in a broadcast Oct. 22 by radio station KNX Los Angeles under the title, "Frozen Funds and Heated Words." The transcript filling 16 single-spaced pages, also mentions the Freedom Agenda Program.

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LITERATURE AVAILABLE. In addition to the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read statement, and other items (see Newsletter III: 3, p. 4-5),

we have now available for free distribution the following:

1. "The Problem of Censorship in Public Libraries," by Luther Evans, former Librarian of Congress. 1p. The American Civil Liberties Union has let us have 1,000 copies for distribution.

2. "The Books They Won't Let You Read," by Robert V. R. Brown, a reprint of an article in the October Redbook magazine. 2p. 400 copies.

3. "The Attack on Our Libraries," by James Rorty, a reprint of his article in the June Commentary. 9p. 400 copies.

4. "Excerpts from Public Library Book-Selection Policy Statements." 8p. About 50 copies. This was distributed at the Philadelphia Book Selection Conference.

5. "The School Library Bill of Rights." 1p. 200 copies.

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LEGIONNAIRE "ASSULTS" PUBLIC LIBRARY. Policies and actions of the Punxsutawney (Pa.) Public Library have been recently attacked by the Legion News published by the John Jacob Fisher Post, No. 62 of Punxsutawney. The latest issue (December) of the News (Pete Wehrle, editor) carries an editorial, "Our Library." In it the American Library Association is referred to as "leftist," "A Red Front Organization" and "Communist Organization." After saying that a "rather prominent member of the Library Board has made a survey of the Legion members and has come to the conclusion that the Legion protest against Communist books on the shelves and against the ALA Bill of Rights is the work of one man," the editorial continues in part:

"Just to get the tactical situation in order so that both sides know why they are being slugged lets just give the picture as we see it. On one hand we have the American Library Association which has a leftist tinge. On the other hand we have the Punxsy Library Board who have unanimously adopted a Bill of Rights issued by the ALA. In the middle we have the John Jacob Fisher Post 62 of the American Legion Post in Punxsy. Now the question is - Are we going to permit our local Library Board to tie up with a Red Front organization? Are we going to allow Communist slanted books to occupy the shelves of our public library? The answer is NO

"In short folks we are going to do a job on **this** matter. We will pick the field and the time and place of the **fray**. We will also pick the method - these things are always the prerogative of the assault (sic) force. It would be much simpler for all of us if the Board would negate their action on the American Library Association Bill of Rights and adopt some reasonable rules for keeping Communist literature from the shelves. This is the conclusion we will ultimately come to anyhow."

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FREEDOM AGENDA PROGRAM. Established some months ago by the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund, a creation of the League of Women Voters, the Freedom Agenda Program continues to grow and make news. Basic material of the program is a series of pamphlets on aspects of civil liberties by such experts as Professor Zechariah Chafee of Harvard; Professor T. V. Smith of Syracuse University, former Congressman; and Professor Robert K. Carr of Dartmouth. Its declared purpose is "to promote wider understanding of our constitutional freedoms - their history, their meaning and their relations to national security in order to combat some of the confusion and fear generated by current tensions."

Pattern of Freedom Agenda according to its own bulletin is to stimulate discussion of civil liberties on the local level. Shape of the program varies from community to community. Each local group is free to choose as much of Agenda's prepared material as it wishes and to add other material it feels is suited to local community needs.

Sponsors of Freedom Agenda point to recent sporadic attacks on its program as proof of the program's value. In November the National Executive Committee of the American Legion, acting on a report from the Legion post in Westchester County, N. Y., condemned an F. A. pamphlet (unspecified in AP dispatch, Nov. 18) "written by an alleged Communist sympathizer," and called on the League of Women Voters to re-evaluate the entire Freedom Agenda Program to separate the wheat from the chaff. . . ." Replied Mrs. John G. Lee, League President, according to the AP, "The League of Women Voters will not withdraw its support of Freedom Agenda. Believing as it does in the principle of free speech and free examination of all ideas, it will not yield to intimidation, oppression or false charges. . . ." (For those who would like to learn more about the nature of this difference of opinion, Freedom Agenda, 124 Lexington Ave., New York 16, has available a copy of the Westchester American Legion report, known as James White's Report, and a detailed reply entitled "A Few Tips on Meeting Attacks: Illustrated by Comments on the James White Report.") . . .

In Dallas, Texas Dr. Willis Tate, president of Southern Methodist University, linked the attack on a local Freedom Agenda course to attacks on allowing a labor seminar on campus, and on having books on Communism in the university library (AP dispatch, Sept. 28).

Defending the freedom of the university's program, President Tate told the Dallas Kiwanis Club, "We can't train international lawyers and foreign missionaries without their knowledge of Communism. . . . Our students are not juveniles. They are adults and must be treated like adults. We can't protect them from controversy or shield them from the facts of life. . . . New ideas are the most important things in the world."

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PRIOR CENSORSHIP. Newspaper editorials have generally condemned the content of Confidential, the magazine with the 4 million circulation and the \$7.5 million in pending libel suits.

Little noted, however, was the lack of a hearing before banishment of the magazine from the mails by the Post Office. When Confidential's lawyer argued (AP, Oct. 7) that the Post Office order to hold up mail distribution of the magazine violated the First Amendment (freedom of speech) and the Fifth Amendment (due process of law), the magazine won the first round when Judge Luther Youngdahl dismissed the order and issued a decision requiring a hearing before the next issue was either cleared or banned from the mails.

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HENNINGS COMMITTEE. First phase of the hearings by the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights ended in December, having aired many grievances and listened to many witnesses. The hearings which are to examine infringement of liberties under the Bill of Rights "article by article and clause by clause" began with the First Amendment, and have dealt principally with security regulations in the Armed Services, with passport procedures, with other loyalty-security problems. On freedom of thought, according to the Washington Post and Times Herald (Sept. 18) John Lester Buford, president of the National Education Association, testified, "Academic freedom has been impaired or denied, not only through pressure brought upon teachers, but by censorship of textbooks and teaching materials." He added that a climate of fear often fostered "by local pressure groups is abridging freedom to the detriment of the learner." The hearings are scheduled to continue after the holidays.

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BANNED BOOKS CATALOG. The University of Kansas Library has issued an attractively printed and descriptive 27-page pamphlet on the banned books exhibited there last spring (see Newsletter III: 4, p. 3). Several thousand copies, financed by the Fund for the Republic, have been distributed to newspaper editors and to public, college and school libraries. The Miltonian title is: "He who destroys a good Booke, kills reason itself - an exhibition of books which have survived Fire, the Sword and the Censors."

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LIBRARY ASSOCIATION PLANS IN MINNESOTA. The Intellectual Freedom Committee of the Minnesota Library Association at the fall MLA meeting distributed a study kit concerned with a proposed bill relating to "obscene printed matter" which spells out fair and full legal procedure for prosecuting the sale and distribution of such matter. Minnesota's librarians have a year in which to study this material and to get their communities interested in the bill by means of discussion groups. It is planned that if the MLA goes on record in favor of the proposed legislation a year hence, it will be presented at the 1957 session of the state legislature.

The bill, a model of its kind, was drawn up by Professor Robert C. McClure of the University of Minnesota Law School, expert on the problem of censorship. Church and newspaper editorial groups as well as librarians have shown their interest in fostering a sound legal procedure for handling objectionable printed matter. More than most states, Minnesota has been plagued in the past several years by extra-legal censorship and by a rash of what has been deemed ill-conceived legislation in the area.

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YOUR RIGHT TO READ. The Social Science Research Center of the University of Minnesota Graduate School has published Social Science and Freedom, a Report to the People, the eighth in a series of annual public lectures on problems of current interest in the social sciences, "and of particular interest to the citizens of Minnesota." In an Introduction Professor Donald G. Patterson notes the opposition of the Reece Committee on Foundations to current developments in social science. One of the eight lectures on aspects of social science and freedom is "Your Right to Read," by David Berninghausen, Director of the University's Library School and former Secretary and Chairman of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee.

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NEW LIBRARY ON SUBVERSION AND TOTALITARIANISM. Four men formerly connected with the Federal Bureau of Investigation have established in Washington the Foundation for American Research, "a large free public library of published documents on totalitarianism." According to the Saturday Evening Post (Aug. 6), the new institution will not include confidential information from government files, and will depend on the public for financial support.

The American Civil Liberties Union has applauded the Foundation's "recognition of the fact that evaluation and interpretation of the library material would inevitably place the Foundation in the position of sponsoring a private security program," but it has urged the new Foundation to take three steps to avoid possible abuses of civil rights growing out of the use of its library:

1. To include critical as well as favorable comments on the reports of federal and state legislative committees dealing with alleged subversive groups and individuals.
2. To attempt to obtain a statement for the library files from people and organizations named in the reports, in order to provide "as full and complete information as possible to the public. . . ."
3. To seek "advice from a professional librarian in connection with the acquisition and classification of material."

In reply, Foundation officials said, according to the ACLU Bulletin

(Sept. 5), that "professional qualifications of officers and employees would receive careful consideration, but did not comment directly on the other points raised in the ACLU communication."

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MOVIE CENSORSHIP. In December the American Civil Liberties Union called for abolition of the motion picture industry's code of self-censorship. In a letter to Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, ACLU executive director Patrick Malin attacked the code as a denial of free expression (ACLU Weekly Bulletin, Dec. 12). "We earnestly suggest," the letter says, "that the Code be eliminated, and the responsibility for presentation of acceptable films be placed where it belongs, in the hands of the individual company and producer and the general public who, in the last analysis, will be the final judge, and the courts where the problem of obscenity can best be handled."

"The Man With the Golden Arm," a film dealing with the drug problem (taboo under the Code), has been promised distribution by United Artists, a member of the MPAA, thereby opposing the decision of its parent organization, according to the Bulletin. The Code has also been criticized by Fred J. Schwartz, president of the Distributor Corporation of America, for withholding the seal of approval from the film "I Am a Camera," which mentions abortion, another Code taboo. . . . In Kansas the film "The Moon Is Blue" was released after a ban of two years when the United States Supreme Court overturned a decision of the Kansas Supreme Court which on technical grounds had upheld a double judgment of Kansas censors that the film was "obscene." (Salina Journal, Oct. 24)

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THE RIGHT TO READ. How much literary freedom actually exists in the United States today? How much should exist? Paul Blanshard seeks to answer these questions in The Right to Read (Beacon Press, \$3.50), a book which librarians may consider the most important nontechnical book dealing with library issues in 1955.

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ANDERSONVILLE. William H. Allen through his "Institute for Public Service" is attempting to frighten librarians into restricting or refusing to buy MacKinlay Kantor's Andersonville (World, \$5) by distributing a folder entitled "This Is Addressed to Men Only No Women" and a supplementary postcard headed "Public Librarians' Perfect Perfume - Pornoff." Typical quote (from the postcard): "Public library purveyors of Pornoff are usually women and girls. . . . Its ingredients are Pornography, Profanity, Putridity."

Head of the Brooklyn Public Library, Francis R. St. John, is quoted on Andersonville in a follow-up folder: "The book has been carefully read by the library staff. We believe it to be a sincere portrayal of an incident

in history presented with honesty and integrity by the author. To describe a prisoner of war camp in either a factual or fictionized account entails the description of unpleasant scenes. We believe, also, that the elimination of these facts would only mislead the reader as to the true conditions under which men lived, suffered and died.

"As you point out, . . .this book has been acclaimed by scholars whose comments have been published in reputable periodicals. These comments have supported the fact that, although this is a work of fiction, it is on the whole historically accurate.

"We believe, therefore, that to remove this book from our shelves would be to deprive the public of a well written, sincere book which draws a strong and important parallel with incidents and conditions some of our people endured during World War II."

Allen calls St. John's comments a "Library Filth Manifesto," and says he (Allen) wasn't writing about "library shelves" but about "sending Andersonville into homes of trusting mothers." His final sentence: "Why not learn who if anyone of your public library has read the recent indecencies before sending them into homes?"

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VIEWS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM. Three recently issued books on academic freedom are: The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States, by Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger (Columbia University Press, \$5.50); Academic Freedom in Our Time, by Robert M. MacIver (Columbia University Press, \$4); Collectivism on the Campus: A Battle for the Mind in American Colleges, by E. Merrill Root (Devin-Adair, \$5). First two books are the result of the American Academic Freedom Project operating under a grant from the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation. The third book takes a quite opposite view of academic freedom.

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COMMUNISM, CONFORMITY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES. The Chicago Sun-Times "Quick Quiz" on November 2 posed the question to four citizens, "Do you feel books favorable to communism should be allowed in our libraries?" Three answered "no," one "yes."

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NEWS SHORTS, According to a UP dispatch, (Nov. 16), the Post Office has banned a "for men only" cartoon book for fraudently promising "spicy" or "obscene" contents and not living up to its promise. . . .

Mrs. Ada White, foe of Robin Hood and member of the Indiana School Textbook Commission, has vowed opposition to adopting three school books because "they peddle the Commie line" (Indianapolis Times, Dec. 3). . . .

Mrs. Evans Woolen III, who was sent to Moscow in 1954 to help establish a school for children of the American Diplomatic corps, says she has given up a plan to teach a short course on Russian history and life in Indianapolis high schools because "sound teaching and learning are not possible in an atmosphere fired with emotion and suspicion" (Indianapolis Times, Oct. 7)....

In dismissing a motion for acquittal brought by author Harvey O'Connor Federal Judge Joseph C. McGarrahy ruled (UP dispatch, Nov. 15) that Congress has the power to question authors of books used in overseas libraries of the U. S. Information Service about possible Communist connections. O'Connor's motion had charged that the questions asked by Senator McCarthy's Subcommittee in 1953 invaded his rights to freedom of speech under the first amendment. . . .

The Catholic Women's League of Toronto has been attempting to get booksellers and newsdealers to cease selling 300 books listed as "objectionable" by "Publications Disapproved" of the National Organization of Decent Literature (AP dispatch, Nov. 14). . . .

Major research libraries throughout the Soviet Union have agreed to exchange books and newspapers with comparable institutions in the United States (N. Y. Times, Oct. 28). . . .

Librarian Donald W. Kohlstedt, head of a local Committee of Thirteen reviewing complaints about "printed smut and filth," was commended in a Grand Rapids (Mich.) Herald editorial (Dec. 5) for saying the problem was one of education rather than censorship. . . .

University of Oregon policy of asking visiting speakers not to make political speeches is being contrasted unfavorably with the open policy at its sister institution at Corvallis, Oregon State College (Oregon Register-Guard, Dec. 11). . . .

Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 - a story of firemen of the future who start fires (of books) rather than extinguish them - has been scheduled for Hollywood filming next year by Paul Gregory Productions (N. Y. Times, Sept. 6). A stage version has been scheduled to open in New York in February. The title of the story refers to the temperature at which books burn. . . .

Russian authorities have refused to release a special movie on working conditions of foreign correspondents made with a Russian camera crew for showing in New York as part of an overseas Press Club program on "Freedom to Know" (N. Y. Herald Tribune, Nov. 14). . . .

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