

LIBRARIES AND THE WAR

A Statement of Library Policy

ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

June 26, 1942

THE American Library Association believes that the American people are faced by three problems of such dominating importance as to demand the concentrated efforts of all agencies. They are:

1. How to make our maximum contribution to the winning of the war;
2. Whether we as a nation wish to return to pre-war conditions or to continue progress toward democratic goals;
3. Whether and to what extent we want our country to participate in the organization of the world for peace.

The Association therefore recommends that every library give the greatest possible emphasis for the duration of the war to those materials and services which will give people the facts and ideas that will enable them to make intelligent decisions on these important questions; and it calls upon its officers to assist libraries in carrying out this program with all the means and imagination at their command.

Libraries must always refrain from telling people what to think. They cannot avoid the responsibility of helping them to decide what to think about.