

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE ALA ROUND TABLE  
ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF LIBRARIES

ALA Midwinter  
Washington, D.C. - January 31, 1969

Dr. Dorothy Bendix, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Library Science, Drexel Institute of Technology, served as temporary chairman. She opened the meeting by thanking the people who had come there on their own time and had paid their own expenses. She thanked COO for their speedy action in establishing the Round Table. (It took only about six months for ALA to accept the Round Table.) Finally, she thanked the people who had prepared the agenda for the meeting. (Copy attached.)

The following people at the head table were then introduced: Ruth Warncke, Deputy Executive Director, American Library Association; Patricia Schuman, Acquisitions Librarian and Instructor, New York City Community College; Betty-Carol Sellen, Brooklyn College; George Hathaway, Brooklyn College; Diane McMullen, Free Library of Philadelphia; and Anne Sweat, Assistant Coordinator of Adult Services, Prince George's County (Maryland) Memorial Library.

Diane McMullen and Anne Sweat were asked to take notes of the meeting.

Dr. Bendix pointed out that the Round Table, in order to be effective, must operate on two levels, national and local. Not all interested parties will be able, for one reason or another, to serve on national committees of the Round Table. However, problems existing in the various communities will provide ample opportunities for people to be involved in action at the local level.

Item I. - Presentation by the New York Librarians Round Table on Social Responsibilities of Libraries.

Patricia Schuman, Betty-Carol Sellen, and George Hathaway reported the experiences of the New York City Round Table on Social Responsibilities of Libraries. (Copy attached.) Time was provided for questions and discussion. The following questions on the New York experience were discussed:

1. Question: Did the New York group consider the possibility of publishing a rebuttal to the mis-information on decentralization? (Father Jolian Lang, Librarian, Quincy College Library, Quincy, Illinois)

Answer: There was a Commission in action in New York which prepared a kit of factual information. The kit is available.

Answer: Publishing a rebuttal could cause individuals to get into difficulty with the institutions for which they work.

2. Question: Were all librarians in New York City included?

Answer: The group was kept small, because the meetings were held in people's apartments. The group was composed of academic librarians, for the most part; a few public librarians; library school students; and one special librarian. No school librarians participated.

3. Question: Would it have helped if ALA could have imposed sanctions? (Frank Levine, Supervisor of Library Service to the Disadvantaged, Maryland Department of Library Extension)

Answer: The New York group was cautious because the ALA Round Table on the Social Responsibilities of Libraries had not yet been established officially. If it had been official, it would have been easier to get things done.

An unidentified man stated that the opinions expressed by Geraldine Clark, Black Supervisors' Association, Afro-America Teachers' Association, New York, were not representative of the opinions of school librarians in New York.

Miriam Braverman, graduate student in Library Science, Columbia University, said that some members of the New York City Round Table felt that the Round Table must be able to speak out strongly on a point of view. The Round Table must take a stand and not be afraid to speak out. The New York petition resulted from this meeting. (Copy attached)

The Chairman, noting that this was not the time nor the place to discuss community control versus the Teachers' Union, asked if there were any additional questions on the New York experience. Since there were no further questions, the next item of business was Organization (Temporary), including the following proposed committees: Steering Committee, Program Committee, Clearinghouse Committee, and By-Laws Committee.

#### Item II. - Organization (Temporary)

Dr. Bendix suggested that, in order to facilitate the establishment of a temporary organization with temporary committees to function between now and the ALA Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey, those interested in participating in the temporary organization get together at the end of the meeting rather than take up time which she felt should be spent in a discussion of areas of concern. She also proposed that the group establish a policy that the chairman of any ALA Committee should not be eligible to volunteer to chair one of the committees of the Round Table on Social Responsibilities of Libraries. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed.

Eric Moon, Director of Editorial Development, R.R. Bowker Company, New York, urged that everyone present should be involved in selecting the people to lead the Round Table. "It is their Round Table, and they have a right to see who volunteers to lead it and to help decide who the leaders will be."

The Chairman stated that if all get involved, nothing much will be done. "We must grow with ideas because we can not decide everything today." Dr. Bendix suggested that sheets of paper be circulated for people to indicate what issues they want to work on between Midwinter and Atlantic City. The Round Table should show that individuals can participate without holding an office and without being appointed to a committee.

Eric Moon insisted that everyone present should be involved in selecting the people to lead the Round Table.

E.J. Josey, Associate Librarian, State Library Academic and Research Library Bureau, Albany, New York, asked Eric Moon to suggest a procedure.

Julia Losinski, Coordinator of Young Adult Services, Prince George's County Memorial Library, and Chairman YASD of ALA, asked what the committees will do.

Nina Ladoff, Director, St. Charles County Library, Missouri, said the Steering Committee would receive mail and do the dirty work. This committee would be the means of dealing with the organization problem so that all interested individuals can participate.

Jackie Peldzos, Brooklyn College, said the Steering Committee would need a secretary to handle correspondence, a treasurer, and regional representatives. The Clearinghouse Committee would receive information from the Steering Committee and from individuals, print the information, and distribute it to interested individuals. The Program Committee would work with the Steering Committee and the Clearinghouse Committee to plan a program for the ALA Conference in Atlantic City. This would be an independent program, rather than a program of the Steering Committee.

Ken Duchac, Deputy Director, Brooklyn Public Library, charged that the group was already acting like an ALA committee. He asked how the Steering Committee can operate without funds. Would there be some arrangement for regional operating funds? Then he suggested that the Chairman ask for suggestions and/or nominations from the floor.

Immediately, Arthur Curley, Montclair Public Library, Montclair, New Jersey, nominated Ken Duchac for Chairman of the Round Table or Chairman of the Steering Committee. Ken Duchac indicated his willingness to work on a committee, but with his new job and new responsibilities he does not have time to serve as Chairman.

In answer to the question of how the Steering Committee can operate without funds, the Chairman said that, later in the meeting, voluntary contributions would be solicited from those individuals who had not contributed at the meeting in Kansas City. It was suggested that the Steering Committee, by necessity, even if people pay their own way, would have to be a regional committee. It was moved, seconded, and the group rejected the motion.

The question of whether or not a national committee was possible was then discussed. Elizabeth Hage, Director, Prince George's County Memorial Library, said that each interested individual should consider the availability of his own personal funds. Helga Eason, Head Community Relations Department, Public Library, Miami, Florida, suggested that a National Executive Committee was needed. Ruth Warncke said that an Organizing, not Steering, Committee was needed. An Organizing Committee must meet, get things clear, and put the group into operation. Eric Moon said the Organizing Committee must get everything into proper form to fit into ALA.

Gerri Hall, Free Library of Philadelphia, said a definition of Steering Committee is needed. Some consider it an information-feeding committee.

Bill DeJohn, Community Affairs Librarian, Missouri State Library, emphasized the fact that people selected for the Steering (or Organizing) Committee should be individuals with time to keep in contact with the group. They should be people who could spend the next few months really working hard on getting the committee going. Both E.J. Josey and Gerri Hall stressed the fact that volunteers would work and urged the group to select people who would be willing to work.

Ken Duchac moved that the group elect an Organizing Committee of seven members, including a chairman, to set up a structure for permanent organization of the Round Table to present to ALA and to be sure that the By-Laws Committee functions and that the Program Committee prepares for the ALA Conference in Atlantic City. The motion was seconded and passed.

The opinion was expressed that the group was hung up on being librarians. It was suggested that the Chairman ask for hands of those interested in serving as regional representatives and pick the representatives so that all present could see who the people would be.

John Hurst, President, Missouri Library Association, said he was present because of his interest in Item III on the agenda, General Discussion of Areas of Concern, and he asked that the group get on with it.

At this point Bill DeJohn volunteered to serve on the Organizing Committee and urged those interested in volunteering to join him in front of the room, so the group could see them.

Nina Ladoff moved that the volunteers be permitted to get the group down to seven and to select a chairman while the rest of the group discussed Item III. The motion seconded and was passed.

Item III. - General Discussion of Areas of Concern.

The following areas of concern were presented.

1. Dr. Bendix--Two jobs for the Round Table before the ALA Conference in Atlantic City:
  - a. To discover if PLA is working on changing Public Library Standards and to discover if AALS is working on revising the standards--away from the current middle class standards--of admission to library schools;
  - b. To work on constructive alternatives.
2. Frank Levine expressed concern for state prison libraries and hoped that something could be done to encourage the wardens to channel energies of the prisoners into educational and library activities rather than into hard labor. E.J. Josey pointed out that there is a need to make black publications available. Black prisoners can not get black newspapers in prison libraries.
3. Eva Yarborough, retired librarian - Consider how individuals work in the community. What do you want to do and how? Then consider what you would like your library to do and how. She recommended the leaflet, "What any White Woman Can Do in the New Movement for Social Change," available from the League of Women Voters Education Fund, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Single copy is fifteen cents. Quantity prices upon request.
4. E.J. Josey - Investigate the employment and promotion of black librarians. What ALA does, it has been forced to do. Black librarians are still discriminated against. A survey of 217 college libraries in New York revealed that only 2 library directors are black.
5. Bill Hinchliff, Associate Media Center Director, Federal City College, Washington, D.C. - Propose that ALA use money to hire a black recruiter to travel and find black males willing to work with children in the ghetto.
6. Evelyn Levy, Library Supervisor, Community Action Program, Baltimore, Maryland - Get involved in the subject of community participation and community control. Libraries have not been considered important enough to be the center of this.
7. Henry Kapenstein - N.E. Area Administrator, Free Library of Philadelphia - Investigate a tie-in with what other organizations are doing. Health and Welfare Councils, YWCA's have changed their focus from a stand-by, to an active, status.
8. June Thurston, Librarian, Yakima Valley Regional Library, Yakima, Washington - Work with migrant farm workers.
9. Mary Anne Russell, Librarian, Arlington County Public Library - Present substantive suggestions to library schools to increase the

social awareness of students. She feels that degree training has not prepared the students; and, although she is a recent graduate of the University of Maryland, she feels that her degree is already obsolete. In addition, attention should be given to the training and/or stimulation of librarians (on the job) to social awareness.

10. Joan E. Clark, Audio-Visual Consultant Librarian Development Division, State Library, Albany, N.Y. - Push for more autonomy in local Branch Libraries of urban and inner-city areas. Encourage local Branch libraries to budget for programs.
11. Marshall Leventer - Explore methods of getting minority areas involved in library services and of meeting the needs of new populations.
12. Nina Ladoff - Work with suburban refugees from the inner city. Identify how to educate people for the revolution that is here. Educate young adults and children for the revolution to come.

Ruth Warncke then spoke briefly to the group about what should be done between now and next January to influence ALA. She suggested a thorough examination of the ALA Bulletin for reprints of program memoranda to find out what units of ALA have been making efforts in the area of social responsibilities and then a follow-up contact of the units for further information. She also referred the group to the ALA Bulletin, November, 1968, which provides organizational information. Miss Warncke thought the group would be especially interested in:

1. Do You Have Something To Say? (p. 1255)
2. To Propose an Activity. (p. 1256)
3. Speaking Out on an Issue. (pp. 1256-1257)
4. Petition Procedures. (pp. 1260-1261)
  - a. Petition to Call a Meeting. (p. 1260)
  - b. Petition Proposing Additional Nomination. (p. 1260)
  - c. Petition for the Establishment of a Division or Round Table. (p. 1261)

It was announced that Bill DeJohn had been selected Chairman of the Organizing Committee. Members of the Committee are Betty-Carol Sellen, Brooklyn College Library; Marjorie Barker, Prince George's County (Maryland) Memorial Library; Charles Weisenberg, Public Information Director, Los Angeles Public Library; Kenneth Duchac; Margaret Turanski, Free Library of Philadelphia; and Marshall Leventer.

Miriam Braverman moved that the Organizing Committee be given the power to co-opt four additional members from those nominated by the group. Motion was seconded and passed.

Nominees were E.J. Josey, who declined in favor of Binnie Tate, Los Angeles Public Library; Virginia Ross; Bill Streamer, Enoch Pratt Free Library; Joseph McDonald, Free Library of Philadelphia; and Patricia Raley, Library of Congress. Miss Raley said she could not serve because she is not a member of ALA. Ruth Warncke said this organization is temporary and until it is officially organized under ALA, a non-member could serve in any capacity.

The four additional members selected by the Organizing Committee were Binne Tate, Patricia Raley, Bill Streamer, and Joseph McDonald.

It was moved that the slate of volunteer members of the Organizing Committee be accepted. Motion was seconded and passed.

It was suggested that Bill DeJohn chair the remainder of the meeting.

Father Lang suggested that information about the Round Table be published in a periodical that librarians read, so that people who were not at the meeting could see the article and could join the Round Table.

Helen Vogel, Assistant Librarian, Falls Church (Virginia) Public Library, said it is important to carry news of the Round Table to local communities and to get sanction from state organizations. She proposed that the group instruct the Organizing Committee to prepare a design paper to let others know what has been done and what is being done.

Bill DeJohn asked those who wanted to volunteer for committees to meet with the Organizing Committee after the meeting. He urged people to spell out their ideas and send suggestions to him: Bill DeJohn, Missouri State Library, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101. He promised that the individual would receive an answer. Those who have expressed interest in the Round Table will be notified within a month.

#### Item IV. - Voluntary Contributions for Operating Funds.

A shopping bag was passed among the group to collect contributions for operating funds. Checks were to be made out to Bill DeJohn, Chairman. Contributions totaled \$287.00.

#### Item V. - Miscellaneous

Copies of the notes taken by Anne Sweat at the organizing meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, were distributed. George Hathaway announced that additional copies of the New York list are available.

The Chairman thanked R.R. Bowker for publishing the list. Nina Ladoff suggested that thanks be expressed to those who worked so hard,

in spite of difficulties, to get the Round Table off the ground.

Ken Duchac urged a special thanks to Dorothy Bendix for her willingness, in spite of ill health, to take over as temporary chairman of the meeting and make it go.

George Hathaway urged the people to go forth and function as individual groups, to do what needs to be done.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne A. Sweat  
Prince George's County Memorial Library  
Hyattsville, Maryland

ALA ROUNDTABLE ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF LIBRARIES

Organizational Meeting: January 31, 1969

AGENDA

Item I: Presentation by the New York Librarians Roundtable  
on Social Responsibilities of Libraries.  
Question and discussion period included.

Item II: Organization (Temporary)

Suggested Committees: Steering Committee  
Program Committee  
Clearinghouse Committee  
By-Laws Committee

Item III: General discussion of areas of concern.

Item IV: Voluntary contributions for operating funds.

Item V: Miscellaneous