

Minutes
SRRT Action Council
Annual Conference
San Francisco, California
27, 29 June 1992

Presiding: Action Council Coordinator - Sherre Dryden

Attendance (27th): Sign-up sheet missing.

Attendance (29th): At Large Members - Denise Botto, Sherre Dryden, Deb Gilchrist, Carol Greenholz, Cynthia Johanson, Al Kagan, Steve Murden, Mark Rosenzweig, Theresa Tobin, Daniel Tsang.

Task Force Representatives - Sylvia Curtis (Alternatives in Print TF), Roland Hansen (Gay & Lesbian TF), Elaine Harger (Library Union TF & PLG Liaison), Donnarae McCann (Civil Rights TF), Stephen Stillwell (Peace Information Exchange TF), Madeleine Tainton (Feminist TF), Karen Whittlesey-First (Gay & Lesbian TF), David Williams (International Human Rights TF).

Affiliates & Liaisons - Carol Barta (KSRRT), Sandy Berman (MSRRT).

SRRT Members & Guests - Diedre Conkling, Chris Dodge, Dotty Granger, Noel Peattie, Becky Ray, Doug Rippey, Gail Warner, Tom Wilding.

Items Discussed/Decisions Made, not necessarily in the order in which they were reviewed (27th):

- 1) Approved Minutes of the January 1992 meetings in San Antonio.
- 2) Announced results of the 1992 elections for the at-large Action Council seats: Dotty Granger, Al Kagan, Becky Ray, and Theresa Tobin.
- 3) Approved by voice vote a resolution on Loyalty Oaths as a condition for library employment.
- 4) Approved by voice vote the final wording of the resolution on Israeli censorship.
- 5) Approved by vote a resolution on the deportation case of a Palestinian librarian.
- 6) Approved by voice vote a resolution on the dismissal by H.W. Wilson of Will Manley.

- 7) Approved by voice vote a resolution on Universal Health Care.
- 8) Endorsed by voice vote the Seville Statement on Violence.
- 9) Accepted the application of the Oregon state chapter of SRRT for affiliation.
- 10) Appointed Denise Botto as our representative to the Literacy Assembly.
- 11) The employment standards policy draft was referred to Elaine Harger for review.
- 12) The NREN standards policy draft was referred to Sylvia Curtis for review.
- 13) The Task Force on Migration, Refugees, and the Homeless was reinstated with a start-up budget of \$150.

Items Discussed/Decisions Made, not necessarily in the order in which they were reviewed (29th):

- 1) The SRRT response to the revision of the ethics policy statement was referred to Sherre Dryden.
- 2) A proposal to establish a Task Force on Israeli Censorship and Palestinian Libraries was accepted. It will need final approval at a later meeting of Action Council. A start-up budget of \$150 was approved.
- 3) A review of the finances of SRRT revealed that we are in good shape. A project group to review the finances was established. The members are Al Kagan, Elaine Harger, and Roland Hansen.
- 4) The newsletter was reviewed. An increase to 16 pages per issue was approved. It was noted that the editor and the editorial board would be preparing an editorial policy statement. It was also noted that a book review editor had been found. The need for editorial independence was discussed with David and Donnarae expressing a need for some curtailment and Sherre, Sandy, and Theresa asserting that this was improper.
- 5) The report of the membership chair revealed that the South Africa State Library had joined SRRT. There will be a general review of the institutional members of SRRT. The Coordinator will bring up the issue of the South African membership with the appropriate ALA offices. A written report was accepted.

6) Written reports were also accepted from the Civil Rights Task Force and the Liaison to the Freedom to Read Foundation.

7) Approved by voice vote a resolution on the Oregon anti-gay rights initiatives.

The Council then adjourned, and immediately reconvened with the new membership. Elections for 1992-1993 officers were then held. Stephen Stillwell was elected coordinator. Deb Gilchrist was elected secretary. Roland Hansen was elected treasurer, pending his consent. (Which was later received.) Carol Barta volunteered to be our liaison to the Library Education Assembly. Thanks and a round of applause to the outgoing officers - Sherre Dryden and Cynthia Johanson.

A General Membership meeting was held on the 30th. The new officers presided.

17 July 1992

respectfully submitted - Stephen J. Stillwell, jr., Secretary.

(Copies of all resolutions attached.)

1992 Annual Conference

Resolutions Adopted by SRRT

Loyalty Oaths:

WHEREAS a democracy must preserve freedom of thought and expression if it is to survive; and

WHEREAS librarians have a special responsibility to provide information on all sides of controversial issues, but cannot do so if intellectual conformity becomes a factor affecting their employment or tenure; and

WHEREAS loyalty tests can easily lead to the violation of the constitutional rights of library employees by allowing inquiries into their personal affiliations and beliefs; and

WHEREAS requiring library employees to sign loyalty oaths contributes to an atmosphere of suspicion and fear and places constraints on intellectual freedom by implying that it is hazardous for library employees to hold or express views other than those condoned by the employer; and

WHEREAS loyalty tests and oaths are requirements for librarians in many library systems, thus effectively compelling many potential employees to sign meaningless and ineffective affirmations of allegiance in order to gain employment;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association, strongly protest conditions of employment predicated on inquiries into library employees' thoughts, reading matter, associates, or membership in organizations. We also strongly protest compulsory affirmations of allegiance as a condition of employment in libraries. We call on libraries not to impose loyalty tests or oaths as conditions of employment.

Note: Adopted by ALA Membership; ALA Council substituted an alternative resolution from the Intellectual Freedom Committee.

Will Manley:

WHEREAS Will Manley was last week summarily dismissed as a Wilson Library Bulletin contributor because his June 1992 column, which included a "Librarians and Sex" questionnaire, displeased the H.W. Wilson Company President; and

WHEREAS the H.W. Wilson Company President has ordered that all remaining copies of the June 1992 issue to be discarded; and

WHEREAS Mary Jo Godwin, WLB Editor, has resigned in protest;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association censure the H.W. Wilson Company for this flagrant act of censorship; commend Mary Jo Godwin for her personal integrity and outstanding commitment to intellectual freedom; urge the immediate reinstatement of Manley and Godwin, together with public apologies by the Wilson Company to both persons; encourage all libraries and individuals to immediately cancel the WLB subscriptions and ask all other WLB contributors to boycott the magazine unless and until Manley and Godwin are reinstated with apologies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the H.W. Wilson Company and the library press.

Note: Although passed by a wide margin by ALA Membership, this resolution was diluted to a ludicrous point by ALA Council.

Israeli Censorship:

WHEREAS ALA in its Policy #57.3 states that "threats to the freedom of expression of any person becomes threats to the freedom of all; therefore ALA adopts as policy the principles of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly. The association will address the grievances of foreign nationals where the infringement of their rights of free expression is clearly a matter in which all free people should show concern;" and

WHEREAS ALA has over many years voiced its criticism of various countries for practicing censorship and other endangerments to intellectual freedom, in the hope that these countries would stop these practices in response to international concern; and

WHEREAS ALA reaffirmed its commitment to Article 19 in 1991 by quoting it in Policy #57.4: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers;" and

WHEREAS the Article 19 International Center on Censorship's 1991 World Report on Information, Freedom and Censorship (co-published by ALA) documents the following forms of censorship by the

Israeli government in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza: banning publications and books; harassing, imprisoning, and deporting journalists; closing universities, research institutions (and libraries); censoring telecommunications, etc.; and

WHEREAS Israel considers itself to be a democracy established with the express purpose of creating a safe haven for the Jewish people; and

WHEREAS Israel has enjoyed a special relationship with the United States as the recipient of the largest amounts of annual U.S. aid per capita; and

WHEREAS the special relationship and annual aid helps offset the costs of the 25-year Israeli military occupation, making the U.S. a party to these censorship practices and other violations of human rights; and

WHEREAS the tight censorship in the Occupied Territories serves to stifle dialogue and nonviolent expression which are preconditions for a just and peaceful solution to the Palestine / Israel conflict, and has led to serious forms of censorship in Israel itself,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association calls upon the Government of Israel to end all censorship and human rights violations in the Occupied West Bank, Gaza, and in Israel itself; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association encourages representatives of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in the quest for a peaceful and just solution of their conflict, including an end to the prolonged military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association encourages its member to develop ways to support Palestinian and Israeli librarians, journalists, educators, and others working for peace, human rights, and freedom of information and expression, and that ALA establish a Task Force toward these ends; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Israeli Government, the U.S. Department of State, the United Nations, the Article 19 Organization, the International Federation of Library Associations, and the Palestinian

Liberation Organization.

Note: Passed by ALA Membership, amended at ALA Council.

Universal Health Care:

WHEREAS the 50,000-member American Library Association in 1990 adopted a "Library Services for the Poor" policy which enjoins ALA and the library profession to promote "implementation of ... nation health insurance" as a means of reducing poverty; and

WHEREAS Rep. Marty Russo and Sen. Paul Wellstone have introduced legislation to establish a system of single-payer, Canadian-style national health insurance which has already been supported by the American Public Health Association, the Children's Defense Fund, the Consumer Federation of America, Consumers' Union, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Council of Senior Citizens, Physicians for a National Health Program, and many unions, including the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees and the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association endorse H.R.1300 and S.2320, the Universal Health Care Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to Rep. Russo, Sen. Wellstone, and the library press.

Note: Passed by ALA Membership and ALA Council.

Seville Statement:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association add its name to the list of endorsing organizations and encourage ALA to do likewise.

Omar al-Safi:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association protests the deportation of Omar al-Safi from his homeland. Al-Safi, a librarian at Bir Zeit University in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, is being subjected to an "administrative deportation," under which the Israeli military authorities are not required to present any evidence or afford the accused the right to a trial. We note that such

deportations are strictly prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 by a foreign occupier. We call on the Israeli Supreme Court and the Israeli Attorney-General to stop or reverse all deportation proceedings against our colleague, and either release him from "administrative detention" or afford him the right to a formal trial with the public presentation of any evidence against him.

NOTE: Passed by ALA Membership and ALA Council.

Gay & Lesbian Rights:

WHEREAS the voters in Springfield, Oregon, on May 19, 1992 passed a city charter amendment prohibiting the use of public funds or property for promoting, encouraging, or facilitating homosexuality; and

WHEREAS this law and laws like it may be used to remove gay and lesbian materials from publicly-supported libraries and to prevent the acquisition of neutral or positive library materials about homosexuality; and

WHEREAS the Oregon Citizens Alliance has succeeded in placing on the Oregon statewide ballot in November 1992, an initiative which would amend the state constitution to prohibit the use of public funds or property to promote, encourage, or facilitate homosexuality, and which would institutionalize anti-gay discrimination in local and state government throughout Oregon; and

WHEREAS the American Library Association in its Library Bill of Rights and its Freedom to Read Statement strongly opposes all efforts at censorship in libraries, and promotes diversity in library collections, and the inclusion of materials representing the viewpoints of all segments of the community; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association condemns any attempt to censor or exclude any viewpoint on homosexuality from libraries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association urges the Oregon Library Association and all librarians to publicly and energetically oppose the implementation of censorship in Springfield, Oregon, the passage of the anti-gay state initiative in Oregon, and any other similar initiatives in other local or state jurisdictions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Springfield, Oregon, City Council and Mayor, Public Library, and Chamber of Commerce, the Oregon Library Association, the Oregon State Library. OUTPAC (the statewide anti-initiative political action committee), the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, the library press, and the major national gay and lesbian press.

NOTE: Adopted by ALA Membership and ALA Council.