

ALA
Social Responsibilities
Conference
Round Table Newsletter

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TASK FORCE ON GAY LIBERATION

GL met both Wednesday and Thursday. On Wednesday evening at an organizational meeting, ideas of services and functions of GL in SRRT were discussed in some detail. In addition, a member of the group volunteered to serve as coordinator and several regional organizers volunteered. On Thursday evening, a social and consciousness-raising meeting was held, with members of Detroit Gay Liberation Front discussing issues of the GLF. Future action and proposals will appear in newsletters and mailings.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING - WEDNESDAY

The first struggle of the membership meeting was on the agenda. Two resolutions, one on the Southeast Asian War and the other on the 18 year-old vote, posed by SRRT members were voted **NOT** to even be discussed by the membership. This self-censorship was a clue to the later position of the membership on intellectual freedom. Intellectual freedom is something that ALA members espouse; however, by a lack of action, they turn the concept into an empty cliché.

After the amended agenda was passed to include a chance for a future meeting, a motion to continue the meeting all day Thursday was passed.

In the consideration of the ACONDA report, a great deal of parliamentary bullshit on procedure attempted to thwart discussion of the issues of the report. Four hours passed and only the most general recommendations were passed and sent to Council. The sense of the struggle, however, at this meeting was healthy after the initial self-censorship on the issues pressing society. ALTA spoke and approved the entire ACONDA report. Membership action subsequent to the general resolutions however, seemed to ignore this endorsement by the leadership of the public libraries.

TASK FORCE ON WOMEN'S LIBERATION

The scheduled meeting for Thursday did not happen (see below on psychological effect of membership meeting Thursday evening). The resolution passed at its organizational meeting, however, was admitted to the agenda of Membership Meeting under New Business, if this section ever does come to the Membership Meeting.

TASK FORCE ON THE ALTERNATIVE BOOKS IN PRINT

Since no organizational meeting was held this week, the names of volunteers are still being sought. So far, about five people have volunteered, and two publishers have approached the Action Council with an offer to publish the ABIP. The TF on ABIP has temporarily hoped to use the DIRECTORY OF THE AMERICAN LEFT as a source for names and addresses of groups to contact for lists of publications and prices. Pat Schuman, Action Council Coordinator for next year, will welcome additional volunteers.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING - THURSDAY

Emotions ran higher and higher during the meeting on Thursday as more issues vital to ALA were discussed. The first part of the Social Responsibilities section (4a1) was amended to strengthen position statements used in public relations. The second part (4a2) was changed from being an umbrella office of Social Responsibilities to an Office for the Disadvantaged and the Unserved, thus establishing a possible issue advocacy office within ALA in support of the Third World struggle in the U.S.

The membership then, being structure orientated, skipped over other parts of the report having to do with issues, and dealt with the section on Democratization and Reorganization; a mild series of general suggestions for further study. The struggle over 96 Councilors at large that SRRT endorsed, was the most divisive issue. Pet theories and vested interests defeated the

ACONDA principle stated as one-man-one-vote. This whole section, after much heated and equally uninformed debate, was referred back to the ACONDA committee. SRRT, at the approach of the close of the meeting, begged the membership to consider dealing with intellectual freedom at an evening session. The membership agreed.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING THURSDAY EVENING

The boiling point for the membership meeting struggle occurred Thursday evening with the introduction of a change in the first part of the first section (§ 4.C.1.) of ACONDA to include provision for a support and defense fund within ALA. SRRT indicated its support. Directors of the National Freedom Fund for Librarians indicated that if this change happened, they would turn over funds they had collected to the ALA and dissolve. Membership at the meeting, however, rejected almost 2:1 the idea of including an advocacy and support position to change the ALA to assume a place of struggle in our increasingly oppressive institutional rigidity. After the vote of defeat, the chairman of the Black Caucus rose and led a walk-out from the meeting. Those SRRT members who saw this struggle as a confirmation of the suppression and cop-out and hypocrisy of ALA in its position of intellectual freedom joined, and a deep sense of alienation was felt. The sense of the members who remained, both SRRT and non-SRRT ALA members, did not recognize the intellectual political position of the walk-outs, but spoke often of the life-style and youth ("childish") of the walk-outs in derogatory terms. The ALA has come to a deep division of membership in principles, especially in SRRT, and future direction of SRRT and ALA may be divergent instead of leading to common principles of action and organization, together. The meetings of this conference have belied the theme of the convention "Libraries: Resources for Human Understanding". Certainly our American libraries are not even resources for human understanding for those who work in them, the librarians.

This issue was not prepared by Clearinghouse SRRT, but was produced with its knowledge.