



Social Responsibilities Round Table Newsletter ALA

Newsletter #44

ISSN 0065-9096

MAY 1977

special issue(s)

It's hard to decide what the principal issues of our time are---some are so big, so overwhelming and international. Some are little, as big as the decision of library policy on free access.

I've solicited papers from some kind, indulgent activists in a number of fields, people who are living on the frontier of action for social change, international diplomacy, education, peace and nonviolence work.

And I have asked several newsletters for permission to quote from them, (of course they'll let us advocate them) and a few said use anything, some did not answer in time, the New Yorker kindly offered to let me quote them if they could see the article first, but there was not time.

So I've tried to put everything together just about as it came in, as the ideas seemed to come. I hope you find something new or interesting in all of this.

Elizabeth Morrisett
Issue Editor

DETROIT...HELP WANTED: Actors/actresses (you don't have to be pros) for street theater, "Prostitution of Information." Contact Jim Dwyer, University of Oregon Catalog Dept., Eugene, OR 97403...SRRT PROGRAM: "The Prostitution of Information: Fees for Service," Sunday, June 19, 4:30-6 P.M....VISIT THE SRRT BOOTH: Four tables in the professional exhibit area.



DITORIAL WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE LIBRARIANS?

The ALA Council during midwinter meeting turned down a resolution, reaffirming an old library principle from the Library Bill of Rights and always with us these many years: the right of free access! This resolution was passed by the California Library Association in a mail vote. It was brought to the Intellectual Freedom Committee, which passed a resolution backing it. It was presented to the Executive Board and approved. At midwinter council, it was turned down overwhelmingly. Our SRRT-endorsed candidate for president and member of council, Dorothy Broderick, asked for a count. It was 96 to 35.

When asked about votes, one council member said he would like to have voted for it, but he could not go back to his own library where they charge for some services, having voted for free access. Another council member said that we must defend the intellectual freedom and rights of those who can pay.

What do you suppose has happened to our profession? Have the cost accountants completely taken over? After the expenditure of millions of federal money on research, a gift to growth of technology and industry, we cannot afford to let the common citizen see and read the material his taxes paid for? Have all the friendly dinners with trade organizations gone to our heads and our proper allegiance been corrupted?

Our citizens ask that we watch our expenditures, but have we inquired of them whether they want our services centered upon recreational reading for the leisure of those who have time for it, and our real efforts put into serving with automation and new technology those-who-can-pay-the-cost. That doesn't leave very many of us in this democracy. It doesn't sound like the librarians I voted into council.

Talk to your own library association and members who may be going to the Detroit summer meeting. This resolution will be brought to the membership, and its strange defeat needs discussion and education on both sides.



I discovered that most of the persons on the NCLIS advisory committee were either non-librarians or were chairs of networks, big-time libraries, administrators, etc. I couldn't find anyone to speak for small public libraries, rural libraries and high school systems--the front line of the profession. Virtually no one from the alternative library press was present and no one whom I could identify as one of the "young Turks" from the SRRT and no library school students. I haven't the list at hand, but I do recall there being, instead, among others, a man in the past control business from Jackson, Mississippi... to catch silverfish?

E.F. Schumacher (*Small is Beautiful*) says that huge systems of communication and distribution are enormously wasteful of time, money and energy, and that often they do more harm than good. We ought to be thinking "Who will benefit from the new librarianship? Who will make the profit? Who will need all these networks? What demands will they put on energy? I don't see anyone on the advisory committee list likely to be concerned with this problem.

To do him credit, Alphonso Trezza, chair of this commission (NCLIS) was recently quoted in *Library Journal* as saying that the United States was overorganized into networks, and that we need "access for all" instead of "services for elites." (*LJ*, 8/15/77, p. 444). Why not then change the composition of the advisory group? Who, finally, will be admitted to the White House conference? And why have state groups? Why not just one big meeting?

President Carter also comes into focus here. Though he was alerted with the help of the Trilateral Commission, he is a Plains, Georgia man, and a former library trustee. I wouldn't be surprised to find him at the conference, however briefly. Shouldn't SRRT take a stand and address him---and Al Trezza?

--Noel Feattie

(Ed. note: Noel is the valued editor of STAPU, a library periodical available via Route 1, Box 216, Winters, CA. I recommend it.)

Elizabeth Morrisett



INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM TWISTED

A resolution on raising awareness of racism and sexism in librarians was passed last summer at the membership meeting of the American Library Association, after thorough discussion, and 11 amendments were offered.

When the Intellectual Freedom Committee met at the midwinter meeting, representatives of the Children's Services Division came with opposition to this resolution and a plan to rescind.

A subcommittee of the Intellectual Freedom Committee was appointed to write up such a resolution for rescinding. There was a claim that the resolution had been "railroaded."

The subcommittee returned to a subsequent meeting with an appalling resolution, so very bad that all of it was excised except for the bones of the resolution. Then it was voted upon with the heavy weight of the committee for it.

Subsequently, in its progress toward passage by Council, it was urged that an effort be made to reconcile the language of the resolution with the Library Bill of Rights. This is where the matter stands now.

It might be useful to have the original introducers of the racism/sexism resolution respond in open hearings, and some further effort to inform librarians of the issues. It seems impossible that efforts to educate us to understanding of the feelings of those oppressed by racism, etc. can be a very serious danger to intellectual freedom, but if so, we should have a chance to discuss it.

(Ed. note: Florence McMillin, Chairman of the Intellectual Freedom Committee, can be written at ALA, 50 East Huron, Chicago, IL 60611.)

sources

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION WASHINGTON NEWSLETTER: A number of non-profit, public interest lobbying groups in Washington keep tabs of the political and social activities there. One which I know best is the FNCL Washington Newsletter. It is now over 25 years old and sponsored by Quakers.

It is still possible in this country to have an impact on our government, even though it sometimes seems rather slow process. Keep suitable news and newsletters on political action available in your library.



PROGRESSIVE MAGAZINE is a moderate, liberal and progressive magazine of some history, having been started by Senator Bob LaFollette, the great progressive politician from Wisconsin at the turn of the century. It still manages to find outstanding writers to keep readers abreast of the important issues of the month. It is indexed (at last!) in Readers Guide and can be ordered from 408 West Gorham Street, Madison, WI 53703; Monthly, \$15/year.

THE NEW YORKER is a literary magazine whose stories (and sometimes articles) go on and on and on. In the past year, it has turned toward science, with excellent profiles of leading scientists. In December, 1976, it published an excellent survey of the dangers of microwaves, with a history of radar and a look at current marketing of microwave cooking appliances and a severe and detailed look at the failure of the Federal government to properly collect information on the hazards, or to warn, or supervise or control the technology.

Librarians doing reference need to keep an eye on this magazine which, however elitist the audience it cultivates, has been more often covering areas of social change, history and technology.

--E.M.

INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN BULLETIN is familiar to nearly all SRRT members or subscribers. It reviews children's literature and the media children are exposed to on a broad spectrum of values--not only racism, but agism (both young and old), sexism, escapism, materialism, conformism, and so on. The BULLETIN provides a real contrast to commercial reviews, and insights into new ways to think about the messages we have been exposed to for so long that we do not think about them, and assume that "people are that way" and "that is the way things are."

The new review (to be annual) of selected children's books, **HUMAN AND ANTI-HUMAN VALUES IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS**, 1975, has been strangely attacked during the past year and a half by former friends such as the Intellectual Freedom Office of ALA, and the School Library Journal in a recent issue, who accuse the ICBC reviewers of "censorship." All of us know stories, even if we have not been present, of invasions of conservative citizens who wanted *Huckleberry Finn*, or another controversial book removed from the library. At times they physically select all the books they disapprove and hand them over.

Because there is such a variety of values in our complex culture, librarians listen patiently, try to explain the library's right-to-know philosophy, and try to find out what makes the book distressing, either by way of a written analysis of, if necessary, a hearing. People do not get emotional about books without need to explain their thinking. The same need exists for people with new messages on values. They need a forum; they need to be heard. And allowing for the much less serious movement to evaluate materialism, still, each of the values chosen by the ICBC has relationships to our social values, and it is reasonable and right to look at them.

The assumption by library critics seems to be that criticism amounts to censorship. When there is a mob of angry mothers invading the branch library with **HUMAN AND ANTI-HUMAN VALUES** waved aloft, I shall be ready to defend (if not uncritically) the right of the librarian to her copy of *Little Black Sambo*. But this has not happened. And the emotion which has gone into the attacks on the ICBC makes righteous defense of books with large prejudices showing seem a little too early. Interestingly enough, in the reviews done for **HUMAN AND ANTI-HUMAN VALUES** (1975), only two books were acceptable in all the values reviewed for. But these books were not recommended even so, for they both had literary and story defects.

A few years ago, I was defending *Little Black Sambo*, but I had neither read the criticisms and history of its published editions, nor talked to people who could be more sensitive to the non-verbal, body language of the illustrations, and the subtleties of the put down in the story. I am conscious now that there are some works of literature and art that I cannot comment on with the same insights that come from those with closer feeling of the nuances of the subjects.

I heartily recommend that anyone who does not know the Council on Interracial Books for Children to look it up for the sake of your user-public and for yourself. Council on Interracial Books, 1841 Broadway, New York, NY 10023. BULLETIN is published 8 times a year: \$10/individuals; \$15/institutions.

--E.M.

PRISONS

Prisons have been extensively studied. It is well known with all this study that prisons do not solve any social problems. They make criminals. And out of small time criminals they make bigger, more cynical and more hate-filled men and women.

Prisons need to be phased out. Inmates need earlier release. There are alternative techniques of retribution and re-education. Irrationality and emotion seem to enter into the whole realm of punishment and we return to the earliest level of revenge. The father of a murdered college girl in Colorado is trying to get the age for capital punishment lowered to use on the boy who probably murdered his daughter.



What prisons do do is give power to the government---they are a tremendous threat for most people. And they can be used to silence the outspoken, put away the person seen as a threat.

Libraries need much more information on prisons, capital punishment, the experience of prison and release from it, and material on the psychology of cooperation, which is the antithesis of the anti-social spirit produced by the criminal justice system so often. It is important to make it possible to be reasoning and problem solving about this.

MEDICINE

Cancer treatment news is distinguished by a conspiracy of silence by doctors and researchers. The commonest cancers: breast, lung, gastro-intestinal and genital, continue to kill more and more people every year. The cancer business is very big. "It just doesn't pay to rock the boat," one radiologist told Daniel Greenberg when he was studying cancer in 1975.

People fear cancer very much. A very, very small proportion of those whose cancer is detected very, very early can be cured. Most patients build on this hope. They often do not want to hear the truth. Doctors do not want to tell them. And so cancer patients are poisoned with drugs and radiation, mutilated with surgery in efforts to treat the untreatable, when they might elect to be made more comfortable until the time of death. Research needs to be directed toward exploring cancer histories, with direct information from patients, as well as reports from their physicians. And the statistics about cancer should be made available to citizens.

Since so much has been uncovered about the side effects of new drugs rather late in the research on them, it has been suggested that patients should be monitored directly by the Public Health Service through some survey technique, rather than depending only upon physicians and drug company reports to uncover side effects.

—Elizabeth Marinoff

the issues

OPEN LETTER TO BLACK PARENTS

In the Sunday, February 6, 1977 NEW YORK TIMES, Arthur Ashe says: "Since my sophomore year at University of California I have become convinced that we blacks spend too much time on the playing fields and too little time in the libraries."

Ashe tells high school audiences: "For every hour you spend on the athletic field, spend two in the library. Even if you make it as a pro athlete, your career will be over by the time you are 35. So you will need that diploma."

ENVIRONMENT

The new administration has given high priority to reorganizing the enormous morass of federal bureaucracy that deals with energy. Gas shortages in the East have brought interest in alternative sources of energy. Popular interest in nuclear power and the dangers of plutonium has increased.

One organization dealing directly with the energy crisis is Environmental Action of Colorado. Founded in 1970 to coordinate Earth Day activities, it is dedicated to stopping nuclear power and developing alternative energy sources.

The primary activity is EARS, the Environmental Action Reprint Service. Since its beginning in 1973, the grass-roots movement for rational energy policy has grown. The catalog has grown from a one page sheet to a 20 page booklet.

EARS is not just a catalog; it is a collective of four activists who live together and run their information service out of a double garage. "We live in a low-income section of Denver with a home-made solar hot water heating set up and intensive gardening. We are in pretty close touch with the anti-nuclear movement around the country and groups for alternative energy development.

We are committed to informing that 1) nuclear power represents a terrible threat to mankind and the biosphere; 2) alternative sources of energy and conservation are not only desirable, but essential; 3) there is a conspiracy of silence by government and industry on alternative energy; 4) decentralized, appropriate technology and cooperative self-reliance are our best hope to avoid a future of dehumanization, suffering, starvation and possible totalitarianism."

The EARS catalog lists books, booklets, and plans for solar greenhouses, driers, collectors, windpower, wood energy, energy conservation and sources, and technology. Help your library get the best information, and help turn on the sun. (EARS, Environmental Action Reprint Service, 2239 East Colfax, Denver, CO 80206: catalog available.)

Work

(Currently the closest replacement for I.F. Stone's Newsletter for me is WASHINGTON WATCH, a weekly newsletter published at South Point Plaza, Lansing, Michigan 48910. 60 issues/\$16. The following excerpt is from the February 4, 1977 issue. --E.M.)

SPREADING THE WORK--SOLUTION FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

Job scarcity is dangerous. Competition for jobs can reignite racial and class embers. Job insecurity can lead to conservatism and fear of change. Large unemployment can have a long term economic impact on savings patterns, family life through scarce housing and shortages of food, on distribution of income, on decisions to marry, to have children, to start businesses, to invent or produce new things.

Eugene McCarthy, former senator and presidential candidate, sees a danger of a type of feudalism in the freezing of institutions and particularly work. I can already see professions developing into monopolies. There are shortages of doctors, yet how many aspirants make it into medical school? The educational system sieves people in a slight but noticeable degree in all careers to produce similar products--in skills, in attitudes and especially in professional or trade loyalty. Doctors, construction workers, teachers and above all, government workers in special jobs come more and more to resemble each other. Not to rock boats, not to blow whistles on your fellows is the very instructive lesson of recent Watergate and other experiences. The loyal are rewarded, the colonel who told about corruption in the Air Force, the accountant who revealed inefficiency and corruption were both punished.

The library profession has already been exposed to plans for shared jobs. Senator McCarthy (in *The Hard Years*, Viking, 1975) comments: "We have not done anything to spread the work since the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and amendments to it established the standard eight-hour day, forty-hour week, and fifty-week year. We have had over thirty years progress in technology since then--yet the standard for working time remains the same. That act was a result of the Great Depression and of the need to spread existing work...We must consider spreading employment through federal legislation. This can be done by requiring a shorter work day, a shorter work-week, or longer vacations."

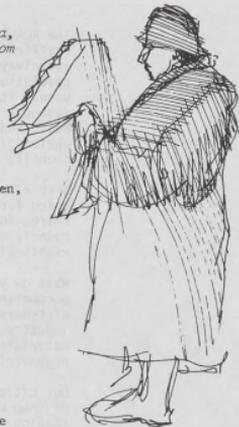
EDUCATION

The three most crucial issues in education during the 1977-78 academic year as I see them are:

- 1) The plight of education for the gifted and talented child. This entire area of education has been ignored and has gone almost completely unfunded since the Nixon administration's early years and through the Ford administration. Now, with the economic situation causing financial constraints, little hope is being held out that children with exceptional talents and intellectual gifts will be subsidized in special programs to stimulate and enhance their special capacities. Parents of handicapped children have been able to make their needs and concerns heard in state legislatures across the country, but parents of gifted and talented children have had little success in stirring interest or concern for their offspring.
- 2) The condition of discouragement, bitterness, powerlessness of the average teacher in the large city school systems is evident. This is a major issue. At the bottom of a hierarchical organization, victims of central school administration disorganization and centralization, with integration plans which seem to change from year to year, the quarrel over busing and curriculum subjecting them to constant pressure, teachers feel ineffective and dysfunctional.
- 3) Growing awareness of the need for parent education and the importance of parent involvement is my third major issue. Suddenly we are awakening to the alarming fact that more children are becoming victims of child abuse and that middle class parents under stress, as well as lower socio-economic class parents just do not know what to do with infants, toddlers and young children. Effective parenting is now being recognized as a set of distinct skills which we do not teach, or provide for in our school programs. Television programs funded by federal grants are being prepared at present for use on prime time show periods. During 1977 there needs to be an effort to focus on this problem.

--Edith King, Professor of Educational Sociology, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado.

(Dr. King is the author of books on early childhood education, with a long time interest in peace education for schools, intercultural education, and global perspectives.)



Sourcebook

The following are brief reviews of journals, books, and other sourcebooks. Examples are scattered throughout the newsletter with the idea that the information given from the material is better than what is said about it.

THE GREEN REVOLUTION is the journal of one of the pioneer alternative living groups (decentralization, vegetarianism, barter, land trusts, commodity-based monetary system, alternative energy, and simple living) founded during the Depression of the '30s by Mildred Loomis and Ralph Borsodi at Lane's End, in Ohio. The journal is published 10 times a year: 418 for libraries; 88 for people. From RD 7, Box 388-A (or P.O. Box 5233), York, PA 17402.

AGWESASNE NOTES, a periodical that covers the American Indian news from Hudson's Bay to Tierra del Fuego and occasionally covers Eastern Hemisphere native born peoples as well, is published by the Mohawk Nation, Roosevelt, N.Y. 13693. NOTES comes out five times a year; suggested price is "printing costs," which are around \$7.50.



WOMEN

Because most women have had biology as their destiny throughout much of human history, it is not surprising that the reproductive system has been the focus of women's liberation movements. This means that in the United States and Western Europe where middle class developments have enabled many women to become financially independent enough to make themselves heard, among their first demands have been the right to control their own bodies, especially in regard to reproduction.

The struggle for widespread contraceptive information and methods, and for legalized abortions, has been particularly difficult in the Catholic countries of Italy, France, and Spain, though the puritan heritage of the United States has not made it easy here either. In Italy, the small but vocal Movement for the Liberation of Women provides information about birth control to those seeking it and has succeeded in getting the government to liberalize divorce laws. Legalizing abortion has been a much more difficult struggle, but the statistics they have widely publicized on the large number of deaths due to illegal abortions are beginning to have an impact.

The group called "Choice" in France has had similar struggles despite the seemingly freer situation for women in that country. Spain and Portugal have some articulate women for the cause among the upper classes, but the movement is not widespread. In the more socialized countries such as the Scandinavian countries and England, the women's movements have been extremely active and visible, and relatively successful---which means that contraceptives and abortions are more readily accessible.

Once the basic right to "control one's own body" has been established (a struggle which is still going on here in the U.S., and barely begun in most parts of the world, then the focus can shift to other aspects of women's rights which accompany liberation from uncontrolled childbearing.

Next to abortion, one of the most controversial subjects raised regarding women's rights has been military conscription. Many opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment raise this issue quite regularly, as if it were a foregone conclusion that the military will always be with us, and that women should not be subjected to choices that men must make.

But women who support equal rights and also oppose the military point out that the diffusion of the positive aspect of women's traditional social role---that of nurturing---into a male-dominated and exploitive society could have the effect of demilitarizing our society and making it more careful of human and natural resources. They say that women should have the right to say "no" to destruction.

In the summer of 1976 nearly 100 women from more than a dozen countries came together on an old farm in France for a five day session on "Women and Nonviolence." Sponsored by the War Resisters International and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, its participants were women active in these organizations and also in women's movements in their countries.

Out of this conference came discussion papers and a continuation of contacts across borders. A proposal is now being considered for a Women's Congress for the Demilitarization of Society. (For information, write to Rita Maran, Women's Congress, WRI, 35 rue van Elweyck, Brussels 1050 Belgium, or to 72 Montagu Mansions, London, W-1, England.)

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has been active in this since 1915, but the initiative is now coming spontaneously from younger women who had previously been active in the women's liberation movements or in anti-militarist groups. Their coming together could produce a powerful movement combining the "right to control one's own body," so that wanted children will be born to women not worn down by childbearing---with the "right to life" for all human beings who have already been born into this world.

--Ann Morrissett Davison, free lance writer, member of the War Resisters International Council and the National Council of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

THE MOVEMENT TOWARD A NEW SOCIETY

This is a group of people seeking alternative lives. It began in Philadelphia and elsewhere. It has defined a healthy society to plan for: PHYSICAL SECURITY (food, shelter, health care) EQUALITY (in wealth and in treatment) NON-EXPLOITATION (income based on needs) WORK OPPORTUNITY, DEMOCRACY IN COMMUNITY AND WORK PLACE, WHOLENESS (loving relationships, personal growth and spiritual well-being) COMMUNITY (mutual goals replacing the drive for possessions and competition) FREEDOM (to organize for social change, develop and communicate ideas, change occupations) CONFLICT (a natural part of life, dealt with honestly) ECOLOGICAL HARMONY (living in balance with nature) WORLD COMMUNITY (recognition of the world citizenship we have on this spaceship Earth.)

We have to face the fact that the healthy society is not here and now. We have acute poverty---one in ten lives in official poverty, more in unrecognized poverty. Good medical care is beyond the budget of most.

We rank 18th in infant mortality in the world, 18th in male life expectancy, 11th in female life expectancy. Our aged live lonely, often unproductive and poverty-ridden lives.

The top 2% of the population owns as much as the bottom 94%. Taxation is known by most people to be unfair. Economic discrimination against blacks and women and other groups continues and increases. Unemployment is an official 7% and unofficially higher. And one can go on and on.

The movement seeks to work together in groups to reach an ecologically oriented economic system: small is beautiful, intermediate technology; conservation, frugality; simplicity, sharing, communal living; planning through democratically controlled bodies; capital investment rate set equal to depreciation rate; production for social use; and so forth.

For information, write Movement for a New Society, 4722 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143. The handbook on Movement theory is \$3.75.

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