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LIBRARIES AND SANCTIONS:
A SPECIAL ISSUE ON SOUTH AFRICA
EDITORIAL: THE PROGRESSIVE LIBRARIANS GUILD

Last fall a small group of librarians met in New York City to discuss issues of mutual concern. What brought us together was a shared feeling that although the world of libraries we all worked in was a fundamental part of the education of the public and a foundation of democracy, the underlying assumptions that informed decisions made in libraries tended to belie that mission. We saw in our libraries the move towards commercialization, we saw “marketing” or “merchandising” enthusiastically embraced as a “strategy” for public library development, we saw our main forum, Library Journal, moving towards the world of controlled market circulation where the line between advertising and articles disappears. In short, we saw that the line behind which the library stood as a moral and educational force in society was being breached by the tide of fads of the American way of doing business.

Where, we wondered, were the voices opposing fees for service? Where were the voices demanding increased appropriations for service to the unserved? Where were the progressive voices of librarianship? They were out there. Here and there, all over the country, but often isolated and sometimes disspirited. What these voices need is a sounding board, a forum. We created PLG to bring together all of the disparate expressions of critical and social activist thought and practice within the profession, to give them coherence and force. PLG has taken much of its inspiration from activist librarians like Sanford Berman, E. J. Josey, and Zoia Horn, who have set a standard of commitment and excellence for the profession which we intend to uphold. We hope this journal helps extend the influence of the ideas they have pioneered and blaze new trails as well.

For this preview issue, we have concentrated on libraries, sanctions and South Africa because the boycott debate has not been sufficiently analyzed in the library literature and because no other development has crystalized, as this has, the debate over the politics of information in the library world. The lead article on the “book boycott” attempts to set out a framework within which we can view various debates in the profession on specific policies, (continued on inside back cover)
a framework which we can all use to determine where we stand, one that takes into account the array of forces that need to be considered when we talk about censorship and sanctions. This is followed by an impassioned plea to continue to apply sanctions rigorously by one of our members who has intimate knowledge of the mass democratic movement. Elsewhere he provides an unusual glimpse into the actual world of South African libraries. The AAP’s attempt to roll back the boycott is a sub-theme of this preview issue and is addressed in the third article, which was solicited and then rejected by American Libraries. We hope that the articles and documents published here make clear that American First Amendment rights are really not the issue; the issue is the reality of power in South Africa. By turning the sanctions debate into a question of censorship, we ignore the relationship between information and power in any society. We close this issue with a few articles unrelated to the South Africa debate, but very much related to the broad concerns of PLG.

Why have we called ourselves "progressive"? The term has been abused, misunderstood, ridiculed. In America it has stood for a whole range of political perspectives, but what we want it to mean goes back to its roots at the turn of the century, when to be a progressive meant to be in favor of people and suspicious of corporations, to be in favor of economic democracy and against monopolies and imperialism. We want our name to call to mind the reforming impulse of the early decades of this century, but also to encompass the best of the activism of the 1930s and of the radicalism of the 1960s, when hopes for a better world were not dismissed out-of-hand as utopian and impractical. Our small band, now numbering 68 PLGers, refuses to accept what now exists in libraries as inevitable and unchanging. We believe that to be a professional librarian means to think critically about what we do and to help create the kinds of libraries that reflect society's highest ideals.

We hope you will join us. We welcome your comments and criticisms, articles and news. Above all, we welcome your membership and participation.

Membership in PLG costs just $5 annually. To join, fill out this coupon and send with check (made payable to Elaine Harger) to: Progressive Librarians Guild, c/o Empire State College, School of Labor Studies Library, 330 West 42nd Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036.

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THE SOUTH AFRICA “BOOK BOYCOTT”:
CENSORSHIP OR SOLIDARITY?
by Mark Rosenzweig and Elaine Harger

In January and February of 1988, the eminent civil libertarian, Nat Hentoff, drew the attention of readers of New York’s Village Voice to a significant, if little known, controversy in the library and publishing world. With an article entitled P.W. Botha’s American Helpers (VV 1/12/88), Mr. Hentoff began a series of columns attacking not, as the title might suggest, defenders of President Reagan’s “constructive engagement” with South Africa’s apartheid regime, but, rather, certain proponents of sanctions against South Africa. The accusation was provocative and quite serious: anti-apartheid action initiated by librarians and publishers in the form of a “book boycott” itself constituted censorship, and this “censorship” made these parties virtual accomplices of the racist South African government. Hentoff was reflecting the views of his allies within ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) who sponsored a 1987 resolution asking ALA members to abandon the boycott. The resolution was soundly defeated. More recently, former ALA executive director, Robert Wedgeworth, now dean of Columbia University’s School of Library Service, added his voice to Hentoff’s and the Intellectual Freedom Committee’s in a report entitled The Starvation of Young Black Minds co-sponsored by the Association of American Publishers (AAP) and the Fund for Free Expression (FFE) accusing sanctions supporters of interfering with the “free flow of information” to South Africa and thereby depriving all South Africans and black South Africans in particular of access to the liberating influence of U.S. publications.

The charge that U.S. librarians and publishers, historically among the most vociferous foes of censorship, were P.W. Botha’s “helpers” merits close consideration, especially because ALA members will be asked at the 1990 annual convention in Chicago to vote on a set of SRRT-sponsored guidelines which would continue support for the anti-apartheid movement (see Kagan and Nyquist article on page 18). It is the aim of this article to examine the controversy, its background, responses and reactions, and implications for libraries.

The central issue in the Hentoff columns and the Wedgeworth report concerns the character and implications of a number of measures taken by publishers, book distributors, public and academic libraries and the ALA to contribute concretely to the international campaign against the apartheid regime of South Africa. These measures, which are loosely referred to as the “book boycott”, fall under the umbrella of the cultural and academic boycott and are roughly analogous to other forms of sanctions supported by the international anti-apartheid movement and carried out in various fields, e.g. the economic sanctions and disinvestment campaigns, the sports boycott, the entertainment boycott, etc. Where librarians and library staff have supported anti-apartheid actions they have implemented the “book boycott” in several different ways: 1) libraries have boycotted companies doing business within South Africa; 2) South African vendors and publishers have been boycotted; 3) libraries have refused to send material to official South African institutions through gifts and exchange programs and through interlibrary loan; 4) librarians have not participated in professional, trade or academic events under the auspices of South African organizations nor travelled to South Africa; 5) efforts have been made to expell the South African Institute of Library and Information Science (SAILIS) from the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). Each of these actions when proposed in the U.S. has aroused considerable controversy by those who oppose boycotts and sanctions in general and by those who always find reasons why South Africa should not be deprived of a particular item, say, IBM computers, The Georgetown Law Review, DIALOG, or American entertainers performing at Sun City.

Where did the call for sanctions come from in the first place? Not from here, but from within South Africa itself. The call for sanctions and boycotts came from a particular sector of South African society, to wit, the majority, or at least the representatives of the black majority’s liberation struggle (the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), the United Democratic Front (UDF), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), and most Pan-Africanist groups), and it has been opposed by other sectors (white political parties, the black spokesmen collaborating with the apartheid regime, etc.) In the international community those groups that respond to the call for sanctions are, to one degree or another, implicitly or explicitly, recognizing the leadership of the anti-apartheid movement and respecting its analysis that such measures will aid in undermining the apartheid system and creating conditions for the construction of a just social order in its place. Those who have opposed such measures despite their opposition to apartheid generally have felt that a gradual transformation of the system was underway and that white “reformers” and black “moderates” will obviate the necessity for any radical change. Always, opponents of sanctions, whether pro- or anti-apartheid, have claimed that their worst effect is on the black majority and are therefore inhumane as well as counter-productive.

In order to evaluate this controversy let us examine the situation within South Africa with particular respect to the the connection between libraries, censorship and apartheid.

The South African government, based on white-minority rule and the system of apartheid, has legalized and institutionalized censorship as one of many measures aimed at securing the unjust status quo. It has practiced this censorship on every shipment of printed matter crossing its borders (from 1981 to 1984 customs officials submitted 25.4% of all the material reviewed by official censors), it has banned books, journalism, political speech and outspoken opponents not just on the pretext...
of a “state of emergency” but under “normal” circumstances (Merrett, 1988, p. 182). The possession and transmission of banned texts has been a legal offense, punishable by fine, arrest or imprisonment. The recent “unbanning” of the ANC, PAC, SACP, and other anti-apartheid groups has removed from the censor’s domain some materials published by these organizations and the writings of banned individuals. However, stringent censorship remains a fact in South Africa (see Merrett’s article, page 32).

How have South African librarians as a whole responded to government censorship? For the most part they have obeyed, justified and implemented censorship laws.

In the spirit of censorship laws and practices, the State Library in Pretoria has long provided a valuable service to dutiful South African librarians by compiling and publishing, among other similar works, the Bibliography of Overseas Publications about South Africa (BOPSA). This is an extensive, perhaps exhaustive, listing and is an ordinary bibliography in all respects but one: many entries carry the warning “Not permitted in South Africa”. A survey of the 1986 BOPSA showed that 44% of books under the heading “Labor” were banned; 71% of political science titles are forbidden. In a similar vein, the South African Department of Education and Training issues a list for school librarians: Approved Library Books. Written approval from a Department inspector must be procured if a library wants to order, or receives as a gift, any title not on the list.

In an article appearing in the July 1988 Wits Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, Censorship, Academic Freedom and South African Librarians by Donna Switzer, we read how South African academic librarians have conformed to censorship laws and how these laws have effected scholarship within the country.

Historically, South African librarians, with only a few exceptions, have chosen to take the safe road. Censorship has been reported on; it has been observed; it has been carried out; complaints have been made because of inefficiencies, paperwork, or lack of clarity; negotiations have taken place to make the system easier, but the librarian willing to say publicly and loudly that censorship in libraries is wrong! has been a voice crying in a professional wilderness.

Switzer then describes her personal experience as a librarian involved in implementing censorship:

It is my firm belief, having had experience with administering censorship in a university library, having taught the legal structure of censorship to librarianship students, having thoroughly researched the subject and written about it, having experienced the problems encountered by the researcher who needs banned material and, finally, having had the experience of being told that my research results would be banned, that censorship has no place in an academic environment. Not only is the actuality of the system damaging to research and teaching, the mere threat probably does even more harm. No records exist of the number of research projects that have been avoided because the subject was “touchy” but it is likely that the number is large. Censorship has caused many “black holes” of ignorance in South Africa. Such ignorance can only be to the ultimate detriment of the country as it has been in the past.

It is time that South Africa’s professional association [SAILIS] and its members seriously considered the essential conflict between the system of legal censorship in the country and the ethics which should be integral to the profession.

Christopher Merrett, librarian at the University of Natal, writes that the position of SAILIS on censorship is questionable to say the least: “No leading figure in its [SAILIS] hierarchy has made a significant statement about censorship for more than 30 years.” (Merrett, 1988, p. 188). Indeed, browsing through issues of that organization’s publication, the South African Journal for Librarianship and Information Science, is like being caught in a twilight zone. The word “apartheid” is never used and when a writer must refer to inequities between the races in literacy, education, library services, etc. (which are, of course, the direct result of apartheid) they are treated as natural manifestations of a more-or-less normal and smoothly functioning social order.

Since the white ruling class’ power and privilege depends to a certain extent on access to a wide range of information, it is not surprising that South African libraries own banned books. Kept under lock and key, prohibited volumes can be used only at the discretion of the librarian and the readers must prove the “scholarly” nature of their studies. It is doubtful, however, if a curious high school or college student, white or black, visiting the State Library would be allowed to read any book branded as “Not permitted in South Africa.” (See interview, page 21)
Apartheid limits the free access to information and the exchange of ideas in ways other than through censorship. In Transvaal and Natal provinces, for instance, there live over 8,000,000 blacks. Their reading needs are served by 185 libraries which often are single rooms in churches or schools. In the same provinces live 2,000,000 whites. They are provided 571 libraries which more closely resemble the public and school libraries familiar to most U.S. citizens. Money for books, facilities and salaries are distributed according to racial criteria and are therefore disbursed most inequitably. A glance at the 1986 annual report of the Johannesburg Public Library shows that white readers in the areas served by the JPL had 28 branches to use, the colored and Asian populations, also discriminated against on the basis of apartheid, had 8. Library services available to the black population were not even mentioned.

Library administration practice as well controls access and simplifies censorship by not allowing direct orders from publishers or book distributors. All orders must be placed with white-run provincial libraries which fill requests as they please. Non-white libraries have, needless to say, no autonomy.

This sketch of some aspects of the library system in South Africa suggests that their libraries, rather than being besieged bastions of civil liberties, are deeply and completely implicated in apartheid and the censorship which helps maintain it. Censorship has long been accepted as a necessary evil by the white ruling class, even by liberal sectors which have learned to live with censorship's many and varied inconveniences. At this point, let us outline the development of involvement by ALA in the sanctions movement.

In the fall of 1977, the South African government shut down the offices of opposition newspapers and arrested or banned many of their editors. ALA responded to this act of censorship by calling on President Carter and Congress to impose sanctions against South Africa. In addition, the ALA delegation to IFLA was instructed to request that IFLA censure South Africa for violating the basic human right to free expression. Indeed, since then library associations of many nations have been calling for the expulsion of SAILIS from IFLA.

In 1985 ALA began to divest its endowment portfolio of all stock in South African concerns. ALA membership at the annual conference in 1986 passed a resolution calling for “all American librarians to support the struggle for freedom, justice, and equality within a multiracial democratic society in South Africa.” When the U.S. Congress overrode a presidential veto and enacted legislation imposing strict economic sanctions against South Africa in September 1986, several local governments passed ordinances prohibiting municipal purchases of products from companies operating in South Africa. An attempt to enforce one such ordinance in Houston, Texas framed the debate between supporters of sanctions, who consider the crippling of apartheid through a sustained attack on the society's information needs an act of solidarity, and proponents of the “free flow of information”, who regard as censorial boycotts targeting information products and services.

The specific incident which began to polarize the library community involved the Houston Public Library. The library was required by the Houston sanctions ordinance to procure from some 3200 vendors notarized affidavits guaranteeing that each company from which the library purchased materials, services, and supplies did not operate in South Africa. (Many public agencies, besides libraries, have been asked to comply with similar requirements by municipal governments.) Several vendors refused to sign the affidavits and Houston Public was faced with the dilemma of boycotting such library sources as H.W. Wilson Co. and The Wall Street Journal.

In response to this situation the Intellectual Freedom Committee of ALA submitted a resolution to the ALA membership in July 1987 at the annual convention in San Francisco. The resolution stated that “access to information is pivotal in the individual's freedom of choice, and that access...must not be abridged because of the social or political ideologies of the creators of such materials or the geographic origin of their source.” Further, the resolution urged ALA to join with vendors in opposing any ordinances “which affect the choice of vendors with whom the library may do business.” The resolution involved two key claims: one having to do with the free flow of information, which has for a long time been a main concern of the IFC, and the other with the more novel idea that boycotts of library vendors somehow entail censorship. The resolution was defeated. It was defeated because ALA members accepted the fact that, while the call for sanctions by the anti-apartheid movement necessitated some hardship to all involved, the need for solidarity outweighed abridgments on our “freedom of choice” in the struggle to end apartheid.

In response to local initiatives such as the Houston ordinances, the publishing world gradually began to withdraw from contacts with South Africa and the ALA came to recognize the validity of these campaigns. Businesses are not often motivated by moral considerations and in publishing, as elsewhere, we can assume that their main consideration in respecting the boycott has been the “bottom line”. Hentoff criticises publishers who respected the book boycott for being driven by economic interest, i.e. they didn’t want to lose the business of U.S. customers trying to comply with sanctions legislation, but he has undoubtedly found no problems with the not disinterested AAP’s attempt to restore its South African market as expressed in the report The Starvation of Young Black Minds, co-authored by Robert Wedgeworth and Lisa Drew (an editor at William Morrow & Co.) The report opens with a statement of concern, not that there is censorship in South Africa, but that since 1984 U.S. publishers have not been able to be competitive in the South African market due to the boycott! Clearly the AAP is very concerned with the economic interests of its members who will certainly enjoy the profits of renewed book and database trade with South Africa if, under the banner of the free
flow of information, they manage to convince librarians and publishers that the
"book boycott" is a form of censorship.

At the most general level the proposal of a book boycott of South Africa can be viewed as involving the same considerations and generating the same arguments as any sanctions. (The arguments for and against sanctions are well-presented in the
and information boycotts against South Africa by librarians is said to raise certain
"unique" questions, if Hentoff, et. al. are to be believed, because books (and, one
assumes, microforms, cd-roms, on-line databases, etc.) are apparently not of the
same order as, say, live performances by American artists, machine parts, computer
chips, prize fights, capital investments, and so on. Any action impeding the "flow
of information" to South Africa or anywhere else is by definition "censorship". Thus
authors, educators, publishers and the information industry are in violation of First
Amendment - type rights if they are involved in the "book boycott". However,
boycott or not, information - especially books - does not flow freely in South Africa
to whites or blacks; censorship has been an essential component in apartheid's
arsenal of social control and repression and it is completely unclear how business as
usual with South Africa in publishing and library exchange would ever affect the
situation for the better. Continuing to allow the South African censors the absolute
freedom to pick and choose the books they wish to allow into the country neither
challenges the principle of censorship nor threatens the system of apartheid.
Unrestricted book trade merely enables the complex and variegated information
needs of the apartheid state and society to be served, while all potentially
discomfiting material is totally controlled or simply excluded. The free shipment of
books to and from South Africa will only provide a wider selection of books for the
censor while also providing ample opportunities for propagandists creating illusions
of press and speech freedom in the land of apartheid. American librarians who
support breaking ties with South Africa are not themselves censoring books, they are
only refusing to recognize the prerogative of the South African censor.

In addition to the argument that the "book boycott" violated First Amendment
rights and the principle of the free flow of information, there are those who argue
that the democratic ideals contained in U.S. publications are essential to the
development of a democratic, non-racial South Africa and, therefore, the book
boycott deprives both black and white South Africans of liberating "western" ideals.
Publishers Weekly provided two columns in 1987 illustrating typical justifications
in this vein for sending material to the South African censors. In one, When
Freedom to Read Suffers (PW, 7/17/87, p. 38) by Prof. Irving Louis Horowitz, we
read that "my concern ... is the decisions of McGraw-Hill and other publishing firms
to terminate their South African operations and what it means in terms of freedom to
read in a non-democratic context." As we have shown, what freedom to read means
in the non-democratic context of South Africa is the freedom of the censor to pick
and choose what one may read and who may read what. But Prof. Horowitz
indulges in the fantasy that the more "democratic" American textbooks will infiltrate
"dangerous" liberal ideas into South Africa and undermine apartheid. He apparently
is not aware that liberal ideas have wide currency in South Africa and their
proponents have lived long and well in coexistence with apartheid. If, moreover,
these American books were powerful briefs for race equality they certainly would
not be allowed in. If on the other hand they are so subtly anti-racist as not to offend
the censors they are unlikely to challenge, in and of themselves, the ideological
and institutional foundations of apartheid. And, finally, if they were let in they probably
wouldn't find their way into the hands of the black majority anyway, not merely on
account of censorship but because of income and resource allocations under
apartheid. This is gradualism at its worst: the oppressed majority must wait for the
power of enlightenment of books from the West, by infiltration past the censor, to
"educate away" the system of apartheid.

Along similar lines, the children's book writer, Gloria Miklowitz, in an article
entitled Why Deny the Children (PW 10/9/87, p. 66) argued that "perhaps publishers
should think again about boycotts...Books can help shape attitudes and change
perceptions...Who knows, maybe that's the best way to end apartheid." Never mind that those who are leading the struggle against apartheid have long since
rejected the idea that that's the "best way", because they know only too well that
"changing perceptions" hasn't worked up to now.

There is another revealing aspect to Miklowitz's column, one which illuminates the idea that if only books containing the ideals of American democracy
could find their way into South Africa peaceful change would be possible. She
refers to a discussion in which Dr. Andree Jeanne Totemeyer examined the changes
in South African children's books as an example of "changing perceptions."

Only a few years ago blacks were shown in picture books barefoot and
with protruding bellies. Whites in contrast were always depicted as
the boss, the hero...Totemeyer recapped the plots of more recent
children's books and illustrated how genuine attempts are being made
to change the stereotypes and bring about understanding between the
races. One difficulty, of course, is that friendships between white
and black children aren't likely...because the races are separated in
schools and living areas by apartheid.

The "one difficulty" is the central problem: the emphasis here is on changing the
representation not the reality. Just as in the U.S. where interracial children's books
have not led to racial harmony, so too attempts to change perceptions by showing
some white and black South African children playing together will not bring an end
to apartheid. To suggest, as this does, that racial problems within a society are
merely a question of lack of "understanding between the races" is naive to say the least. Such understanding can not be developed anyway by creating children's books which obscure the real injustices, degradations and violence of apartheid with false images of non-existent types and situations to replace racist stereotypes. Nor would it necessarily be fostered by books from abroad which represent (and in their own ways, misrepresent) a preferable set of relations between races which is not, in any case, realizable in South Africa without first destroying apartheid.

In their zeal to find arguments for ending the "book boycott" its opponents do a little distortion of reality on their own and concoct evidence that American boycotters bear responsibility for depriving the black majority of access to information and books. The AAP report epitomizes these efforts. In order to substantiate the hardship supposedly inflicted on South African blacks by the boycott, this report seriously misrepresents the information situation in South Africa and indeed the entire social system in which it is embedded. For example, after listing the places where interviews were conducted for the report we are told that:

In the preceding list are a number of institutions which are heavily funded by the South African government. One would normally assume, therefore, that they would support apartheid. However, it is surprising to see the extent to which government-supported libraries and universities are continually and actively engaged in challenging the system.

We would like to know the details of this opposition, especially in light of regular and ongoing protests by black students against the policies of South African universities. In addition, contrary to all previous evidence, the report creates the impression that South African librarians have been vociferous defenders of free access and opponents of censorship, that censorship is not as widespread or as effective as Americans think and that black libraries are basically suffering from a lack of resources rather than problems endemic to the whole apartheid system.

Worse yet, Hentoff, Wedgeworth and the Intellectual Freedom Committee argue, in spite of all we have described above, that, besides there being no positive case for the information and book boycott, the ANC no longer supports these sanctions in any form. Hentoff in an article aimed at publishers with reservations about dealing with South Africa (Washington Post of 12/5/89) quotes a passage from the ANC's statement on the cultural and academic boycott concerning the need for an "inflow to South Africa of progressive cultural products...and ideas". He interprets this to mean that the ANC is opposed to the book and information boycott. Wedgeworth quotes the same passage in the AAP report, and in his Point of View column in the 2/21/89 issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education.

But, the quote has been taken out of context and if one reads the entire document from which it is excerpted it is clear that the ANC continues to be firmly opposed to open exchange of information with apartheid South Africa. Hentoff and Wedgeworth distort the ANC's actual stand and fail to inform their readers of a central point in the ANC's statement on the academic and cultural boycott, published in Sechaba, June 1989:

The cultural and academic boycott of apartheid South Africa (that is, those bodies, institutions, cultural workers and their product that promote, defend and give aid and comfort to the system of white minority domination) must consistently and continuously be strengthened as part of our overall strategy for the isolation of the apartheid regime.

The ANC's main concern when it modified and clarified its position on the academic and cultural boycott was with assuring that the anti-apartheid movement itself did not become cut off from the rest of the world. This is the policy of selectivity in the cultural boycott. Note that selectivity is not a general revision of sanctions extending to economic relations, etc. It is restricted to the cultural sphere and strictly defined in relation to contacts with the "other South Africa" subject to the approval of the MDM/ANC. (See Culture in Another South Africa for a discussion of the cultural alternative movement within South Africa and Kagan/Nyquist article here for an overview of selective sanctions and Wedgeworth report.)

The free flow of information argument may have been substantive if misguided, but it was absurd to claim (and this is what, in the final analysis, is at the heart of the Hentoff, Wedgeworth, IFC argument) that the interference with a library's choice of vendors constitutes a violation of our First Amendment rights especially when alternative sources could be found if one were to go to the trouble and expense of doing so. Foregoing particular equipment or formats of information produced or distributed by one company or another which might provide allegedly better access is not a fundamental violation of the free flow of information either. To call this censorship is merely polemical. Limitations on choices of vendor or format is not aimed at the content of the "information package" but, in this case, is a strategy aimed at the economic interests of businesses for whom "information" is a mere commodity which they provide access to not freely but only at considerable profit. In any case, our decisions about what to purchase are routinely based on budgetary constraints and economic considerations and yet these decisions which take place daily in libraries across the country would seldom be considered as censorship. Of course, they often end up restricting access to all kinds of material and sometimes in a "biased" way.
With regards to the free flow of information argument - yes, the “book boycott” has hurt South Africans. It was meant precisely to hit at the vital need for information for the normal functioning of this most abnormal and abhorrent social system. As long as their basic information needs are met, and access to a wide range of printed materials from abroad is available, white South Africans have been willing to endure the undoubted indignity and inconvenience of censorship by their state authorities in the interest of preserving the status quo. But an international information and book boycott has made life considerably more difficult for them although, it is important to point out, it did not substantively worsen the situation of blacks who are systematically denied quality information access anyway. It is hard to see how simply maintaining U.S. book commerce with South Africa would ever help significantly extend access to the disenfranchised who are hampered not just by censorship, but by the whole institutional arrangement of society. For blacks, unequal access to information is of a piece with their unequal access to everything in that society. It is part and parcel of the everyday world of complete subjection which is apartheid. Frankly, the aim of a book boycott is to make the functioning of the entire system which sustains white privilege more difficult, yes, to starve it of more or less necessary information until the costs of apartheid become too high to bear. The difference between sanctions and mere statements of protest is that sanctions can help make apartheid as uneconomical and inefficient as possible and are, unlike pious proclamations, difficult to ignore.

The situation in South Africa is developing rapidly since the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela. Now more than ever, it is important to understand the continuing problems of South Africa as consequences of the continued existence of apartheid and not the effect of conditions imposed on that country from outside by international attempts to isolate the apartheid regime. The greatest disservice of the anti-boycott faction has been to try to shift our perception of the responsibility for black problems away from Pretoria and to attempt to redirect the focus of the resolution of the problem from the internal struggle to a kind of “peace process” lubricated by infusions of American books. They counterpose an analysis and an implicit strategy completely at variance with that of the MDM and ANC, but one which has all the earmarks of the political perspectives of the United States Information Agency and the State Department.

We feel that despite the arguments of Wedgeworth, Hentoff, the Intellectual Freedom Committee, etc. there is no reason, in principle, why U.S. libraries and publishers should not contribute to the rapid elimination of apartheid through the use of sanctions in our respective fields. Any boycott (or strike for that matter) can be said to interfere with certain freedoms. Claiming, however, that an information and book boycott violates the freedoms protected by the First Amendment suggests that the content of writing and speech or the right to expression is being tampered with rather than freedom of contract and trade and other less sexy things. If books are considered “special”, why not phonograph records, computer programs, sports events, databases, business contracts, and so on, until the very idea of sanctions disappears and there is only the possibility of talking the racists out of it. The black majority cannot and will not wait until the white supremacists are persuaded. They are fighting with everything at their disposal. Librarians, like all other citizens, can stand aside and watch, or take sides. It is to the credit of many American librarians that they have taken sides against apartheid and supported concrete action.

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INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIANSHIP AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA
by Joseph Reilly

The liberation struggle in South Africa is now on the agenda of international librarianship. The ALA has before it numerous proposals such as SRRT's Guidelines for Librarians Interacting with South Africa. IFLA is being challenged to end its recognition of members belonging to the racist government-sponsored library organization known as the South African Institute of Library and Information Science (SAILIS). The Association of American Publishers (AAP), which lobbies on behalf of the U.S. publishing community, is attempting to break the boycott and re-enter the apartheid economy and is seeking ALA endorsement of such a move. Within South Africa there are attempts to launch new non-racial library associations affiliated with the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM).

Our response to these activities must take place in the context of the overall struggle, led by the African National Congress and the MDM to create a non-racial democratic South Africa. Therefore, all librarians deciding to get involved must accept from the outset that the international library community has no say whatsoever in determining the principles or policies of the liberation movement. Those parties who in their overzealous stand on "censorship" or the "free flow of information" would have argued in the 1930's and 40's that the international library community had no right to cut off National Socialist Germany from current information must be dismissed without question. Reactionary elements such as Judith Krug and Robert Wedgeworth, as well as their proxy forces, such as the Village Voice's Nat Hentoff, must be monitored closely and brought to task for supporting institutions of the apartheid regime.

Again, the basic principle that we must operate with is that we as librarians must follow the policies of the liberation movement and then develop strategies in line with these policies. Anything else puts us in league with those racist, paternalistic voices that cannot detach themselves from a colonial mentality. The specific policy of the liberation movement is a two-pronged one: 1) isolate the government and all its institutions, whether or not they are its defense forces or its department of education and 2) re-align ourselves with the thousands of non-racial, democratic community-based organizations that make up the MDM. This means, for example, that the ALA must not only pass resolutions condemning the regime's banning, imprisonment and attempted assassination of our colleagues in South Africa (as it indeed did on behalf of librarian Joyce Mabudafhasi during the 1990 Midwinter Conference), but that it must not announce the lifting of restrictions on these beleaguered librarians in a way that implicitly lends praise to the head of the apartheid state (which it did in its April 1990 news release "South African librarian free of restrictions"). If we are to identify ourselves with the democratic majority of South Africa, then we must celebrate all of de Klerk's steps as a victory of the South African people and not as the actions of an enlightened regime.

Once this is accomplished, our stand on issues such as the SRRT Guidelines, the AAP efforts to end the "book boycott", and the removal of SAILIS members from IFLA will be rooted in the language of the liberation movement, which, by the regime's own admission, represents tens of millions of South African citizens. From here we can participate in the efforts to construct a post-apartheid South Africa as allies of the democratic majority. Serious matters such as mass literacy campaigns will demand our immediate attention. Profound questions such as a New Information Order will demand our contributions and opinions. And the very definition of the library will have to be reassessed in light of the myriad of "resource centers" that have sprung up across South Africa in an effort to provide both informative and leisure materials to the thousands of besieged communities that the apartheid state has wrought havoc upon.

A good starting point is to seek more dialogue with our South African colleagues. We should be in contact with the Education Department of the African National Congress through its Washington D.C. office. We should offer our support to the MDM's National Education Coordinating Committee, as well as its teacher and student associations, all of which have up-to-the-minute statistics and information on education conditions and community-based projects intended to alleviate those conditions. And, most of all, as librarians we must give official, institutional recognition to the new MDM-affiliated non-racial library organization, which is to be launched in July of this year. This organization is being founded by those professional librarians who have fought against the pro-apartheid library structure, SAILIS, for years. They will be working in coordination with all of the above mentioned democratic organizations to construct a post-apartheid information order that will serve the needs of all South African citizens.

It is only these organizations that can speak on behalf of the democratic majority's information needs. Only they can ensure that our material aid is directed to responsible, non-government affiliated institutions with proven track records of community service. Only these organizations can help us select candidates for MLS scholarship programs. If we are to consider ourselves as more than mere observers of the struggle for democracy in South Africa, then our recognition and support of their existence, which is in itself a victory, must come now, and not on the day when the final institutions of apartheid collapse. Such recognition and support must not be limited to public announcements condemning apartheid and affirming the call for non-racial democracy. Our interactions with South Africa must require direct participation in the community-based, service-oriented projects and activities designed and conducted by the MDM and ANC.
THE STARVATION OF YOUNG BLACK MINDS?
A CRITIQUE
by Al Kagan and Corinne Nyquist

Introduction
In an article in the January 1990 issue of American Libraries, Janice Woo describes the recent Wedgeworth/Drew report which advocates breaking the international boycott of South Africa. The Starvation of Young Black Minds: the Effect of Book Boycotts in South Africa: Report of a Fact-Finding Mission to South Africa, May 18-28, 1989.) The authors use American First Amendment arguments to support giving publishers carte blanche to sell their materials. Ms. Woo also notes that guidelines are being developed by the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) International Human Rights Task Force for "boycott exemption." We wish to set the record straight by explaining the thrust of our guidelines and their relationship to the AAP report.

Background
In 1970, the Unesco General Conference adopted Resolution 8 regarding apartheid and colonialism. One year later Unesco suspended relations with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) because of the role of apartheid institutions within that body (relations were later restored). The American Library Association became involved in 1972 when the Council passed a resolution prohibiting ALA relationships with organizations that violate human rights and social justice principles. In 1978, as a result of further membership pressure, ALA Council endorsed Congressional sanctions against South Africa. Affiliation with the International Federation for Documentation (FID) was suspended due to South African connections in 1980, and ALA divested its South African related investments in 1985. At the 1985 Chicago IFLA meeting a resolution was passed denying membership to institutions that adhere to the policy of apartheid. In 1986, the IFLA Membership and Council passed a firm resolution on the "Abridgement of Human Rights in South Africa." Among its provisions are opposition to the apartheid South African Library Association's participation in IFLA and opposition to the expansion of bibliographic utilities into South Africa. And in 1989, the ALA Executive Board voted to discontinue the Public Library Trusteeship, an investment program for ALA member libraries due to its slow compliance with ALA investment policy towards South Africa.

Developments in South Africa
After the Sharpeville Massacre and subsequent banning of the liberation movements in 1960-61, the anti-apartheid movement within South Africa and worldwide called for a complete boycott of South Africa. The United Nation's General Assembly, the Organization of African Unity, and various other international organizations and governments have voted to respect this boycott. However, in the past few years the movement to create an alternative society and culture has become so powerful within South Africa that the total boycott restrictions became unsuitable. The movement modified its policy to a selective boycott because of the lack of distinction between the new progressive organizations and the apartheid regime. This became quite clear in 1987 when the largest legal (at that time) umbrella organization, the United Democratic Front (UDF), wrote that:

One should seek to make the distinction between isolating the regime and isolating the people of South Africa.

In May of 1989, the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the largest and most respected liberation movement, also issued a Position Paper on the Cultural and Academic Boycott. This document reinforces the UDF position and calls on the even larger new umbrella organization, the Mass Democratic Movement, to implement this selective boycott policy.

The Movement has won a great victory with the recent legalization of the ANC and UDF (February 1990). Progress is evident with the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and the partial lifting of the State of Emergency. However apartheid remains in effect, and the struggle is far from over. South Africa has not changed its constitution, rather the Government has been pressured to make concessions. The Movement is now calling for increased sanctions to intensify the drive for freedom and democracy.

The AAP Report
The Wedgeworth/Drew report for the Association of American Publishers is based on discussions with "more than 75 representatives of various organizations and institutions." However, only a few individuals and a partial list of organizations are listed in the report. Some of the organizations listed have a clear interest in breaking the boycott. For example, the two national libraries are government institutions established in the service of apartheid. The three commercial bookstores listed have an obvious economic interest. For other "institutions" listed such as the three black townships, it is crucial to know who was interviewed, the people in the street, or the apartheid township authorities?

The question of the legitimacy of the sample is further compounded by the apparent omission of first-hand interaction with representatives of the South African public schools. It seems that the authors have second-hand knowledge because they write that "We were told that the public schools situation is characterized by substandard instruction, inferior texts where available at all, frequent student strikes to protest school conditions and major distractions resulting from student involvement in the Mass Democratic Movement [MDM] in black communities."
INTERVIEW WITH SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY USERS
by Joseph Reilly

The system of apartheid in South Africa acts as an agent of disunity in all areas of library activity. The nation's ability to acquire the information that it needs and wants is fragmented in two major ways, as shown by South African scholar Mokobung Nkomo: 1) an inequitable allocation of resources, with the tiny white minority receiving a disproportionately large share and the great majority of the population's Blacks, Coloureds, Asians receiving little or no funds and 2) a censorship system that keeps a broad range of books (materials) out of public reach (see Interracial Books for Children Bulletin, v. 16, no.5/6).

Though the apartheid regime has released Nelson Mandela and unbanned the African National Congress, and though some works and some authors are now legally available, the situation described by Nkomo remains the same for the average library patron. What follows are excerpts from a series of interviews conducted during the summer of 1989 with two South Africans about their past experiences in gaining access to materials through libraries and other means and what their expectations are for the library's role in a post-apartheid information order.

Joan is a white South African woman who was exiled in the mid-1980's for her community work done on behalf of the South African Council of Churches. Thabo is a young black South African man from Soweto who, like many other children who survived the Soweto Uprising of June 1976, joined the African National Congress. Because his political work eventually endangered his life, he was forced into exile in Tanzania where the ANC was in the process of developing their prototypical education facility known as the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (or SOMAFCO). After graduating from SOMAFCO, Thabo began his undergraduate degree in the United States where he is currently residing. These interviews were conducted by Joseph Reilly.

JR: How did you get your hands on works that are banned. My experience with South Africans in the U.S. is that the first thing they do when they arrive is go out and get The Struggle is My Life by Nelson Mandela.

JOAN: That was literally the first thing I did when I got to this country. But at home we would get those books from the neighboring states, from people that were travelling. The procedure was that they would mail them in, they didn't actually carry them in when they returned home. We used to have these bizarre expeditions into the neighboring states where we would fill up the motorcar tires, the tubes, with books.

JR: You mean the spare?
JOAN: And the running ones!

JR: What, in the hubcaps?

JOAN: No, right into the tires. The tube was there but it would be cushioned by the books! [Lots of laughter] So there were ways of getting things in and out.

JR: Did you all loan your books to each other?

JOAN: Oh, yes. Books are dog-eared there. They get a lot of mileage.

THABO: One thing that used to happen was that if you knew someone had a book, you’d make a point of it to get your hands on that book. And when you were told to read it in two nights, you read it! When I got my hands on No Easy Walk to Freedom [an early collection of Mandela’s work], I had it for two nights and I had to sacrifice two nights of school work to finish it, because other people were on a waiting list. It was not like you had a book and it was your book. It became a people’s book. It would circulate.

Secondly, you’d make the point to get it out of your hands because if the police should catch you with it then you’re in trouble. You couldn’t get books in the library. But I remember that there was this bookstore in Bloemfontein called Raven Press. Those guys would tell you - Hey, this is hot stuff. Avoid the police because stuff that would be smuggled into the country by the ANC. In other cases, instead of distributing Sechaba [the official journal of the ANC] as Sechaba we’d photocopy some articles and give them different titles and distribute them. But there were also cases where you’d distribute it as is. If we knew that there was a public gathering or something, you see, people would go there earlier and put whatever publications you had there. And whoever arrived first would grab whatever they could! The same thing happened later with the letter of Mandela’s smuggled out of Robben Island.

Some city libraries did have stuff. When I was a student outside of Johannesburg, one of the things we did was to politicize students. We’d run seminars and different political books were there. There was a time when we wanted some of these books that were banned. We went to the library and discovered some of these books were actually there. It was the first time that anyone had discovered that these materials were there! When they were refusing us access, we said: You want drama in this library? You’ll have drama soon!

There was another problem. There were also secret agents or what you’d call police informants. They used to hang around this big park that was by the library. There we used to have discussions at lunch time. And these guys would be there to see who was who and what was up. And they checked on the materials we were taking out!

But that was the city library. Back at our locations [i.e. the black townships], I mean, I could never tell you how to locate a book or what the things written on a catalog card meant. It was not a part of my education. The first time I went to a library was in high school. There was a book on relativity that I had to read for my physics class and even then you were only allowed to read it in the library. There was nothing like checking it out, taking it home and reading it. We didn’t know much about the library and our teachers didn’t know much about library systems. Nobody ever, ever explained to our class how a library functioned. You’d go there and there’d be somebody working there who was not even able to explain what the hell was going on in the place.

For the general people, for the public, the libraries meant nothing. Libraries meant nothing! It was only when one became politically conscious that certain things began to become clear. You knew, hey, there’s a thing called the library where you can get newspapers to read, certain books.

JR: Could each of you describe to me what you’d expect from libraries in post-apartheid South Africa?

JOAN: Firstly, it needs to have a history section that reflects the history of South Africa. You see, the history in South Africa now, its written history, is a history which reflects white people’s interaction with the oppressed people, and it never reflects what happens to the oppressed people. Somehow we have to get the history sorted out so that people can have access to it.

I would like to think that the library in post-apartheid South Africa would also need to encompass some sort of progressive reading development program, because we are dealing with a high degree of illiteracy. So that what you would need are not only history books that are advanced academic reading, but also ones that make simple reading, encouraging people to learn how to read while teaching them the truth of the situation.

Where there has been revolution, there also must be a social revolution as well. So we must have lots of books on other countries that have gone through some of these experiences so that we could learn from them and so that we could help people create an ideal situation.

I would also make the library a forum for drama and art productions and poetry readings, poetry of the people. A place for people’s art and people’s drama. That would be really great if a library could have those things.

THABO: If the library is going to function for us at all, it has got to be broken down into special programs that take into account different levels of people in society. If someone comes into a library we have to be able to guide them to...
different programs that are going to help them to advance. I was there during the construction of the ANC’s school in Tanzania [ie. SOMAFCO] and already we were talking about the different programs that the future library would have. We wanted language programs with tapes and maybe even computer assistance that could help build language skills.

Also, we don’t look at our struggle in isolation from others that have taken place in the world. We want books from all over the world so that we can learn what happened in Vietnam, in Nicaragua, in Cuba. We can learn their successes, their weaknesses and strengths and use those things to help us build our strategies for consolidating the country after independence.

Part of the process is to make education relevant to our own situation. The library must provide materials that make people’s contributions relevant to our society. It does no good to learn something that will not be able to contribute to the progress of the country. We did these studies of other countries of similarities and differences. And all of the books that we did this with were from our library.

Some people that go to SOMAFCO get surprised when they see things such as Das Kapital and they start waving fingers saying - SOMAFCO is communist. They always say this but, hey, we want to know the two sides of the coin. We’d say, - You guys don’t know what is best for the country. We want our system to be a workable one. We study other African countries and we pick the relevant parts of their developments. We are, of course, fortunate that we have these other countries that are changing before we can. And we will surely use the best of these changes for us. That is how I see the future library work in South Africa being relevant to our own situation.

Our people don’t really have any idea of what a library is. And all this should be seen in the context of how we’re educated.

JOAN: Yes, that’s the underlying factor in all of this.

THABO: If libraries were to be a source of information, the people would treasure them. It means that if you give people the right education, they can go there and locate whatever information they want. But the existing education system is not designed for that purpose, especially for black people. Everyone is protected from other countries. They just want to see other countries in a stereotype. In our history books, when we studied Mozambique the freedom fighters of the country were still referred to as terrorists even after they won their independence from Portugal!

JOAN: That phrase of Mokubung Nkomo’s from the conference has stuck with me. He kept talking about compulsory ignorance. Black people in our system are just educated towards ignorance. White people are pushed in a certain direction which is also ignorance!

**THE TIMES MISCOVERS THE ANC**

by Dennis A. Mumble

Reprinted from *Lies of Our Times*

Through decades of brutal repression, the South African apartheid regime has developed its own truth - a truth that consigns the African National Congress and all other anti-apartheid forces to shadowy basements where terrorists and communists plan devious deeds against the law-abiding and god-fearing white master race.

Historically the South African government utilized Cold War rhetoric, gaining tacit support from the West for its world view, which required cloaking the anti-apartheid movement in red flags. With very few exceptions, its western allies and their media were all too eager to accept the apartheid myth and actively helped maintain this structure for almost two generations.

But the explosive growth of the South African liberation movement and its powerful worldwide counterpart elevated the struggle from apartheid’s basement to the top floor of international popular legitimacy through sanctions and defiance campaigns.

The subsequent exposure of apartheid rocked the regime to its very foundations. The ANC and other organizations were “unbanned” in a futile attempt to temper their militancy.

In a highly paternalistic fashion, the National Party leader, F.W. de Klerk, has belatedly sought to restore authority by developing a five-year plan to discard the old-style system while retaining its material and political privileges. De Klerk’s entire 1989 election platform pivoted on the establishment of this alternative path.

While the reality of a failed system has engulfed the ruling party, this fact has apparently escaped the New York Times, which still covers South Africa through the prism of apartheid’s view. Journalistic balance and objectivity assume new meanings in the Times’ coverage, which considers the apartheid infrastructure (police, army, security personnel, journalists, etc.) as primary sources for information on the rebellion while minimizing exposure to the forces opposing the system.

Anti-apartheid organizations are constantly depicted as eerie and “shadowy” bodies. For example, in *A Hard Road for Mandela* (April 5, 1990, p. A1), Christopher Wren actually quotes the traditionally anti-ANC Business Day: “The ANC remains, despite its unbanning, a shadowy organization of uncertain stature and questionable authority.”

Another theme that has been constant in Wren’s coverage of the ANC is one of perceived deep divisions among its members, at a time when the ANC’s unity is at its highest. He constantly harps on divisions between a generation of “impatient” youths and an older generation of leaders out of touch with the ideals of the youth. Every story he has written about the ANC in the last year touches on this theme. In a recent article, *Mandela Agrees to Talk With de Klerk on Violence in Townships*
The South African press speculated today that the [ANC] had pulled out of the talks because it was unprepared and wrecked by internal disagreements.” No names, no quotes, no rebuttals from the ANC, which said it had canceled the talks because the police were killing protesters. It should be noted that, editorially, the Times was even more scandalous. It said (April 6, 1990, p. A34), “Black politics also was the cause of Mr. Mandela’s decision [to postpone the talks]. He was plainly sensitive to the outcry over police killings of black protesters...” Not sensitive to the killing of people, but playing politics, sensitive only to the outcry of over the killings.

Wren has reiterated his unsubstantiated claims of internal division the day before, in A Hard Road For Mandela. In the opening paragraph, he posited that “doubts persist about the readiness of the [ANC] to undertake serious negotiations...and about Mr. Mandela’s ability to consolidate the widest black support.” His definitive sources were: “speculation in the press here, as well as among diplomats and politicians.” One can easily imagine what press, which diplomats, and which politicians Wren is referring to.

Other Times writers also reveal a pattern of vintage kowtowing to and promotion of this National Party propaganda which depicts the ANC as divided and with a soft base of support. John F. Burns’s April 1, 1990 article (p. 4), Understanding de Klerk: Party Man With a Twist, just the latest in a series of flattering profiles on de Klerk, is a deft piece of propaganda. The story is superbly complimentary of de Klerk and his efforts to improve the National Party’s image. It is at the same time highly schizophrenic in its characterization of apartheid, commenting that:

Mr. de Klerk’s broad formula acknowledges that he considers apartheid a dead-end street and that majority rule in some form is inevitable. But Mr. de Klerk has left no doubt, either, that he will strive to protect what the five million whites here have built up...including their property rights.

This is an attempt to rationalize the machinations of the regime by posing a two-sentence contradiction. On the one hand it is intended to convey the complexity of emotions within the regime - a subliminal appeal for time to allow it to clarify its position. And on the other, it conveys a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of apartheid, which is, first and foremost, a system for the accumulation of wealth buttressed by the ideology of white supremacy, leading to staggering inequalities of wealth and power. The two are not separable, as the passage would suggest.

Dropping overt white supremacist themes has struck a sympathetic chord at the Times, which has been meticulously crafting an image of de Klerk as the reluctant administrator caught between two widely divergent poles, with the ANC on the left and the white conservatives on the right. This white-knight theme is taken even further by Burns, who says it is de Klerk’s “profound religious commitment to ideals of justice that sets him apart from his predecessors” and juxtaposes his position against that of Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement:

While Nelson Mandela and other black leaders have said that Mr. de Klerk’s vision appears to encompass limitations on black political authority that they could not accept, many South Africans who favor far-reaching political change say they believe that the real hope for the future may lie not in Mr. de Klerk’s current pronouncements but in his probing, pragmatic cast of mind and instinct for reaching out for new solutions.

The phrasing puts the ANC in the position of extremists asking for too much, too soon; and de Klerk as the religious man of justice, seeking the best practical route. It is lost on the Times that the real threat to peace in South Africa is any pragmatism that requires - in whatever form - the continuation of apartheid and its intolerable injustices. The passage also creates a strange division between “Nelson Mandela and other black leaders” on the one hand and “many South Africans who favor...change” on the other. If these unnamed “many” are from the white minority, that is one thing; but if they are black, the statement is simply untrue.

In African Congress Faulted on Unrest (March 9, 1990, p. A3), Wren featured numerous statements by South African government officials blaming the ANC for “orchestrating the rising violence” in South Africa’s ethnic communities. A terse denial from the ANC is buried in the story. Indeed, Wren tends to accept government assertions of innocence at face value. In South Africa Sends Army to Halt Strife (April 4, 1990, p. A10), he says that “much of the violence that has erupted in the last two months has not directly involved government repression, but fighting between rival black factions.” He notes that “South African police have denied that officers have taken sides in the conflict” and states that Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, the leader of the anti-ANC Inkatha, has charged that the police were - of all things - siding with the pro-ANC United Democratic Front in the violent clashes in Natal province. Wren never mentions the South African Council of Churches report (Statement on Ad Hoc Crisis Meeting, March 29, 1990) describing eyewitness testimony that the police were throwing boxes of ammunition over the sides of their trucks to Inkatha fighters in Pietermaritzburg. Even in an editorial, the Times has called the fighting “a virtual civil war raging between black factions” (April 6, 1990, p. A34), with no mention of police participation. Yet the Washington Post's Allister Sparks was able to meet with independent monitors of the violence and report their observation that “the police have openly colluded with Inkatha” (Natal's "Valley of Death" Goes to War, April 8, 1990, pp. A29, A35).
From this brief review of the 'Times' coverage of the ANC and the anti-apartheid movement generally, it appears quite clear that the paper has very little consideration for those opposing the system. It considers the custodians of apartheid sufficiently acceptable to work closely with them and to promote their new, softer image. This was also evident in its begin treatment of the apartheid election in which the great majority of the population was not permitted to vote.

The liberation of South Africans from apartheid cannot be achieved by the creators of that system. That was made clear in de Klerk's remarks to Parliament April 17. Wren's article on the speech, with the wildly misleading headline De Klerk Endorses Sharing of Power, and the subhead But South African President is Adament in Opposing Domination by Blacks (April 18, 1990, p. A5), opens: "President F.W. de Klerk said today that his government would not agree to majority rule..." (Other papers have more honest headline writers; the same day's Washington Post (p. A1) said: De Klerk Rejects Majority Rule, with the subhead Detail Offered on "Power Sharing": Plan Seen Unacceptable to Blacks; the Philadelphia Inquirer (p. 2) said: De Klerk Rejects Rule by Majority.) So much, incidentally, for Burns' statement two weeks earlier that de Klerk acknowledges "majority rule in some form is inevitable."

To suggest, as the Times continually does, that de Klerk be highly rewarded for being less repressive than his predecessors is to fail or refuse to grasp the fundamental implications of the continuing absolute economic, political, and social domination of the majority by the minority, which is apartheid.

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This article originally appeared in the May 1990 issue of Lies of Our Times and was reprinted with the permission of the author and the publication. In it's editorial note "To Our Readers" Lies of Our Times describes itself as:

...a magazine of media criticism. 'Our Times' are the times we live in but also the words of the New York Times, the most cited news medium in the U.S., our paper of record. Our 'Lies' are more than literal falsehoods; they encompass subjects that have been ignored, hypocrisies, misleading emphases, and hidden premises - the biases which systematically shape reporting. We can address only a sampling of the universe of media lies and distortions. But, over time, we hope Lies of Our Times will go a long way toward correcting the record.

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Dateline: South Africa

The following documents are reprinted here in order that the voices of South Africans working within the anti-apartheid movement might be heard as they speak to us on the issue of sanctions. The first is a message sent by the ANC's representative to the United Nations and discusses claims made by Robert Wedgeworth that his visit to South Africa had the backing of the ANC. The next documents are excerpts of statements made by the primary anti-apartheid organizations on sanctions immediately following the unbanning of the ANC and the release of several prominent political prisoners. The last document comes from an academic librarian at the South African University of Natal and is a response to the partial lifting of some censorship regulations.

ANC MEMORANDUM

TO: Midwinter Conference of the American Library Association
ATTN: E.J. Josey (Guest, from University of Pittsburgh)
FROM: Tebogo Mafole, Chief Representative, African National Congress Observer Mission to the United Nations

The African National Congress (ANC) has been following with great interest the activities of the American Library Association (ALA) as well as those of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). Of particular concern to the African National Congress, as can be expected, have been the activities of the above named organizations in relation to South Africa. In this regard, the ANC along with all the peoples of conscience the world over seek to ensure that such relations help to promote the struggle against apartheid and the creation of a non-racial democratic South Africa.

More specifically, we are concerned that the organizations outside South Africa should, in their dealings with South Africa, adhere strictly to the letter and spirit of the culture and economic boycott of South Africa imposed by the international community including the United Nations.

In this connection, a matter of grave concern has been brought to our attention. Namely, that Mr. Robert Wedgeworth who recently travelled to South Africa has come up with proposals to the ALA and IFLA and that in promoting such proposals, Mr. Wedgeworth had suggested that they enjoy the support of the ANC. This is presumably based on the fact that prior to his trip to South Africa Mr. Wedgeworth called in at the ANC office to discuss his trip.

We wish to state categorically that the meeting between Mr. Wedgeworth and...
the ANC did indeed take place at Mr. Wedgeworth’s insistence and that at that meeting the ANC views on both the trip and its objective were clearly spelt out to Mr. Wedgeworth. These can be summarized as follows: that on matters pertaining to contacts, academically or otherwise, with South Africa, it is of fundamental importance that the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) be involved at every step. This, for instance, includes elaborate consultations regarding the project and visit to South Africa. It is only on this basis that the MDM and the ANC can endorse any such ventures.

It is, therefore, important to underline the fact that the said meeting between Mr. Wedgeworth and the ANC in itself should not be construed as constituting an endorsement of his project. In any event, the ANC has not been apprised of the project itself. It is our hope that this communication will clear any doubt that may arise with regard to the above mentioned issue.

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**INTENSIFY THE STRUGGLE!**

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**African National Congress - 2/2/90**

“We welcome the lifting of the bans on the ANC and other organizations. We also welcome other positive measures announced by F.W. de Klerk such as the suspension of the death sentence, the release of some political prisoners, the ending of media restrictions and the lifting of restrictions on ex-detainees.

We are, however, gravely concerned that the Pretoria regime has taken the decision that some political prisoners will not be released, that the State of Emergency is not lifted in its entirety and that the practice of detention without trial will continue... The normalization of relations between South Africa and the rest of the world must continue to depend on ending the apartheid system. We therefore expect that no country committed to ending white minority domination in South Africa will do anything to lessen the isolation of the apartheid regime.”

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**Congress of South African Trade Unions - 2/2/90**

“The struggle of the people of our country has always been to completely end apartheid and build a non-racial, united and democratic South Africa. We are now seeing the death throes of apartheid, and the birth pangs of a new South Africa struggling to be born.

...Today’s announcements fall short of what was needed. While the decisions of de Klerk to unban the ANC, the SACP and other organizations is significant, and a victory for the people of SA, it still falls short of the fundamental steps needed to end the political conflict in our country.

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The cornerstones of apartheid still remain intact. The Group Areas Act, the Land Act, Population Registration Act, etc. still remain on the statute books. The Internal Security Act, the Public Safety Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, and many other repressive pieces of legislation still prevent free political activity in our country.

The retention of the State of Emergency, albeit in an amended form, will still be used to crush peaceful democratic protest. This was seen in Johannesburg today when the SAP [police] used dogs, tear-gas and batons to crush the joyful demonstrations of our people, thereby making a Mockery of de Klerk’s announcement.

De Klerk still has enormous powers under the repressive apartheid laws to rule us by edict and even re-impose some of the measures which he lifted today.

...We believe that it is only a democratically elected constituent assembly which can legitimately usher in this SA we are all longing for.

There cannot be half measures at this critical time. What our country needs is a bold comprehensive initiative to meet these objectives.

We call on de Klerk to release not only Nelson Mandela but to release all political prisoners...

We call on de Klerk to create the conditions of free political activity as enshrined in the Harare Declaration...

Until then we call on South Africans and the international community not to relax the pressure. Step up the struggle against apartheid so that the momentum of change in SA is not arrested. If we fail to do so, we will have tragically missed a historical opportunity to end the suffering and conflict in our country."

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**United Democratic Front - 2/2/90**

"...We happily welcome the present steps which have been taken by the State President...These steps are a direct result of the struggles which have been waged by our people particularly in the past few years.

...On an occasion such as today it is important for us in welcoming the return of the African National Congress to South African political life that we must address our Afrikaner compatriots in particular but the whites in general. We urge our white compatriots to shed the fears of the past, to welcome the return of the ANC to our political life as a public participant...

To the mass of our people we want to say that freedom is now in sight. Now more than ever before there is greater urgency to intensify the struggle on all fronts...we also call on the international community to provide material support for the struggling people of our country. Now is the time to pressurize the de Klerk government to move rapidly towards democracy. To this end the sanctions campaign must be maintained and indeed intensified. To lift sanctions now would be to run the risk of aborting the process to democracy..."
CENSORSHIP ON THE RETREAT
by Christopher Merrett

President F. W. de Klerk’s 2 February 1990 speech to the opening session of Parliament contained important implications for the University Library. The unbanning of the ANC, PAC and the SACP, and the unbanning and delisting of 175 of their supporters, enabled the library to abolish its “Banned-3” and “Banned-4” categories overnight and return to general circulation material which has been locked up for decades. Among many writers involved are Alex La Guma, Helen Joseph, Ruth First and Harold Wolpe. Some of their work is currently on display in the Main Library foyer.

Well before these measures were announced subscriptions had been placed for Sechaba (ANC) and African Communist (SACP) in the interests of a free flow of information in an era of glasnost and negotiation. Copies of these periodicals will be held in the Short Loan Collection.

Amendments to the Emergency regulations also suggested that the Library’s ability to deliver information to its users would improve in future. The media regulations relating to the printed word have been abolished, as has the power to restrict individuals. Most restrictees were prevented from communicating information and ideas via any media.

These reforms represent an undoubted setback for the State security apparatus in which its power to control ideas and information has been considerably lessened. At the same time most of the Library’s banned book collection remains intact, condemned to a locked cupboard by the Publications Act. In our case this amounts to over 200 titles mainly in the disciplines of History, Political Studies, English, Fine Arts and Psychology. The greatest irony of the present situation lies in the fact that while Nelson Mandela addresses the nation at mass rallies, and through the SABC, his published work is locked in banned book cupboards, and cannot be bought legally in bookshops.

Other forms of statutory censorship remain in force, while powers under the Internal Security Act will continue to encourage self-censorship of various types. A small amount of space has been created for academic freedom, but the struggle for its fulfillment still has a long road to travel. Lessening the impact of censorship on academic work is one of the urgent tasks facing the University of Natal in the 1990s.

PLG REPORTS

PLG TALKS TO THE FUND FOR FREE EXPRESSION

In March of this year, Progressive Librarians Guild members Peter McDonald and Elaine Harger called on the Fund for Free Expression (FFE) to discuss the Fund’s endorsement of the Wedgeworth/Drew report The Starvation of Young Black Minds. We met with Executive Director Sophie Silberberg at the Fund’s Fifth Avenue office overlooking the front steps of the main facility of the New York Public Library.

While the meeting was cordial, little of substance was accomplished in part because Ms. Silberberg said she could not speak on behalf of the FFE Board. She did say, however, that Board members had been divided over the request of the American Association of Publishers’ request that the FFE fund the Wedgeworth/Drew trip to South Africa. She suggested that PLG write a letter to the Fund’s board (on which Robert Wedgeworth sits) and present our position (which is clearly set forth elsewhere in this journal). Ms. Silberberg said she would pass the letter on to the full board at their April 15th meeting for discussion.

As it turned out, this apparently was not really the Executive Director’s intention. When she had our letter in hand, she decided not to present it to the board as a whole but to a committee which duly decided “it will not be discussed at the full meeting of the board.” In her letter of response dated May 18th, she never mentions who sat on this committee, but said in a phone conversation that it consisted of a few individuals interested in the issue.

Not to be outdone, PLG circumvented this wall of intransigence and mailed the original letter off to members of the Fund’s board directly, with a cover letter. No response has been received to date, but doubtless the board’s next meeting will have some small measure of new business to handle.

Reported by Peter McDonald
DeGennaro Calls S.A. Boycott "Mickey Mouse"

Part of library education at Rutgers University is a colloquium where students are exposed to the thoughts and ideas of leaders in the library and information field. The idea of these colloquia is to participate in a dialogue with the people who grapple, day to day, with the conflicts and difficult issues we are introduced to in the classroom.

In one such colloquium Richard DeGennaro, the director of the New York Public Library, and as of June 1 the new administrator of Harvard University's 67 Arts and Sciences Libraries, was invited to speak about "Libraries and Technology: Management Challenges." The afternoon was actually spent talking about a wide range of current topics and only touched briefly on the scheduled agenda.

I had recently become aware of New York Public Library's interlibrary loan activities with South Africa. This practice had been taking place despite ALA's position in upholding the culture and economic boycott of South Africa imposed by the African National Congress and international community, including the United Nations. I was curious to see what Mr. DeGennaro had to say about the boycott and NYPL's lack of participation in it. The questions of intellectual freedom and social responsibility would surely spark a lively debate, or so I thought.

After combating some nervousness I raised my hand. I asked if NYPL was under the jurisdiction of New York City, specifically concerning the cultural and economic boycott of South Africa and the ILL activities taking place. DeGennaro explained that the NYPL Research Library was independent and answered to no one. He then went on to say that the question I posed had been raised recently, and he would tell me the same thing he expressed earlier - NYPL would never decline a request for information no matter what the identity of the requester. If "the devil himself" requested information "we would give it to him." These phrases, I am sad to say, are direct quotes from Mr. DeGennaro. He proceeded to remark that NYPL "does not get involved with Mickey Mouse politics." At this point I was rather stunned and had no articulate reply at hand. DeGennaro kept his answer short, and to the point, and was sure to make no room for argument. Another student asked if any similar situations had come up in the past. The answer was pretty vague, and the subject was promptly dropped.

After the colloquium ended a few students gathered to express our disbelief at Mr. DeGennaro's attitude and manner in addressing the question of South Africa. We were especially surprised at his use of the term "Mickey Mouse politics." This is a person who is considered one of the intellectual leaders in librarianship today. Does the majority of the library profession suffer from a major lack of social consciousness like Mr. DeGennaro? I seriously doubt it.

Reported by Salwa M. Shamy

INTERLIBRARY LOAN OFFICES VIOLATE BOYCOTT
NYPL, LC, Cornell and Harvard Send Material to State Library in Pretoria

It has come to the attention of PLG that several major research libraries have been filling interlibrary loan requests from the South African State Library in Pretoria. At New York Public Library, PLG member Peter McDonald wrote a librarywide memo to the library's director Paul Fasana and others about NYPL's ILL policy of filling requests for South African government agencies. He asked that the library's ILL policy be reviewed. At the same time, Tebogo Mafole, United Nations representative for the African National Congress here in the U.S., wrote Mr. Fasana in concern over NYPL's business-as-usual stand on South Africa. This was followed by another letter to the Director from Peter McDonald reiterating that both national and city-wide ordinances put into serious doubt the legality of NYPL's interaction with Pretoria.

To date (three months later), the United Nations representative of the ANC has still to receive even a word from Fasana on the matter. As for librarian McDonald, the only response he has received to the whole matter has been a two-line memo warning him never to speak on behalf of NYPL. A substantive response has never been offered.

The rationale for this wall of silence, according to a spokesperson, is that NYPL adheres to ALA's Bill of Rights, as if invoking this, in and of itself, is sufficient to preclude any further discourse on the matter.

In the May 1990 issue of American Libraries, Christopher Wright of the Library of Congress writes that "last year the Library of Congress supplied 48 book loans, 70 article photocopies, and 69 location referrals for South African libraries through the State Library in Pretoria." Wright explains that LC has "always supported the free flow of information" and so feels no qualms about sending material to racist institutions within South Africa. LC also sends material to Cuba, Wright informs us, the implication being that LC, like NYPL, would send photocopies to the devil himself. However, the people of Cuba, unlike the majority of people in South Africa, have not asked the international community to impose sanctions on their government. We think that should make a difference and so do most supporters of the anti-apartheid movement.

PLG has also learned that Harvard and Cornell universities regularly send interlibrary loans to Pretoria. Cornell filled 88 requests this past year. All this is being done in violation of ALA's policy on dealings with South Africa.

Reported by Elaine Harger and Peter McDonald
ADDED ENTRIES

POOR PEOPLES' SERVICES
From MSSRT

This draft policy, modeled after the ALA Minority Concerns Policy adopted in 1988, is presented for your consideration. It is a collaborative effort by members of the Minnesota Library Association's Social Responsibilities Round Table. Comments about the draft are welcome. Call Elizabeth Anderson, 612-451-8563.

The [Minnesota Library Association, American Library Association, etc.] promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults, and families in America. These people are affected by a combination of limitations, including illiteracy, illness, social isolation, homelessness, hunger, and discrimination. Therefore, the role played by libraries to enable poor people to participate fully in a democratic society is crucial. Libraries must utilize various resources and strategies to empower poor people. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to sensitize and prepare library staff to identify poor people's needs and deliver relevant services. Within the [Minnesota Library Association, American Library Association, etc.], the coordinating mechanisms for programs and activities dealing with poor people in various divisions, offices, and units should be strengthened, and support for low-income liaison activities should be enhanced.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The [Minnesota Library Association, American Library Association, etc.] shall implement these objectives by:

Promoting the removal of all barriers to library and information services, particularly fees and overdue charges.

Promoting the publication, production, purchase and ready accessibility of print and nonprint materials that honestly address the issues of poverty and homelessness, that deal with poor people in a respectful way, and that are of practical use to low-income patrons.

Promoting full, stable, and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs in support of low-income services, and for pro-active library programs that reach beyond traditional service-sites to poor children, adults, and families.

Promoting training opportunities for librarians, in order to teach effective techniques for generating public funding to upgrade library services to poor people.

Promoting the incorporation of low-income programs and services into regular library budgets in all types of libraries, rather than the tendency to support these projects solely with "soft money" like private or federal grants.

Promoting equity in funding adequate library services for poor people in terms of materials, facilities, and equipment.

Promoting supplemental support for library resources for and about low-income populations by urging local, state, and federal governments, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.

Promoting increased public awareness -- through programs, displays, bibliographies, and publicity -- of the importance of poverty-related library resources and services in all segments of society.

Promoting the determination of output measures through the encouragement of community needs assessments, giving special emphasis to assessing the needs of low-income people and involving both anti-poverty advocates and poor people themselves in such assessment.

Promoting direct representation of poor people and anti-poverty advocates through appointment to local boards and creation of local advisory committees on service to low-income people, such appointments to include library-paid transportation and stipends.

Promoting training to sensitize library staff to issues affecting poor people and to attitudinal and other barriers that hinder poor people's use of libraries.

Promoting networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups, in order to develop programs and services that effectively reach poor people.

Promoting the implementation of an expanded federal low-income housing program, national health insurance, full-employment policy, living minimum wage and welfare payments, affordable day care, and other programs likely to reduce, if not eliminate poverty itself.

Promoting among library staff the collection of food and clothing donations, volunteering personal time to anti-poverty activities, and contributing money to direct-aid-organizations.

Promoting related efforts concerning minorities and women, since these groups are disproportionately represented among poor people.
NATIONWIDE CATALOGUING PETITION
CAMPAIGN CONTINUES
BY SANFORD BERMAN

The Cataloguing Consumers Network (CCN) today began circulating another petition in its year-old campaign to achieve basic cataloguing reforms through grassroots action. Directed to the Library of Congress’ Office for Subject Cataloguing Policy and dealing largely with minority, ethnic, and Third World topics, the new petition urges not only that the dates for the Jewish Holocaust be expanded from “1939-1945” to “1933-1945,” thus coinciding with the period of the Third Reich rather than just World War II, but also asks for the creation of a heading to represent the Romani Holocaust. Another request is to replace such alien and frequently derogatory ethnonyms as ESKIMOS, FALASHAS, LAPPS, AND GYPSIES, with those people’s self-preferred, authentic names: INUIT, BETA ISRAEL, SAMI, and ROMANIES. One more suggestion is to employ the more familiar terms, NAZISM and NAZIS, instead of the currently-used NATIONAL SOCIALISM and NATIONAL SOCIALISTS. The petition concludes with a “laundry list” of needed descriptors, ranging from ANTI-BARBARISM, ANTI-SEMITES, ETHNOCIDE, and ETHNOCIDE to HATE CRIMES, MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION, PALESTINIAN UPRISING, 1987-, and THIRD WORLD LITERATURE.

CCN invites journals, newsletters, groups, and individuals to reproduce and circulate the petition. For more copies of this latest reform effort, as well as the 13 petitions issued last year, contact: Sanford Berman, Convenor, Cataloguing Consumers Network, 4400 Morningside Road, Edina, MN 55416; Phone (work) (612) 541-8570 (home) (612) 925-5738.

To: Mary K. D. Pietris, Chief, Office for Subject Cataloguing Policy,
The Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540

WE, the undersigned, urge the Library of Congress to:

Change the present heading, HOLOCAUST, JEWISH (1939-1945), to HOLOCAUST, JEWISH (1933-1945), thus making the Holocaust coincide with the Third Reich instead of appearing to be merely a byproduct of World War II;

Replace NATIONAL SOCIALISM and NATIONAL SOCIALISTS with the more familiar and commonly used forms, NAZISM and NAZIS;

Fully implement recommendations made in 1983 by the American Library Association’s Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Concepts Denoted by the Term “Primitive” (for details, see Technical Services Quarterly, v. 2, nos. 1/2, Fall/Winter 1984, p. 121-53);

Eliminate “Christian primacy” in all religion-related headings; e.g., assign to works on the Christian deity a new form, GOD (CHRISTIANITY), instead of the unmodified and, therefore, pre-eminent GOD;

Substitute HANSEN’S DISEASE PATIENTS, both terms sanctioned by the U. S. Public Health Service, for the stigmatizing LEPROSY and LEPERS;

Establish and assign these warranted and essential headings:

- AMISTAD REBELLION, 1839
- ANTI-ARABISM
- ANTI-SEMITISM
- ANTI-SEMITISM IN CHRISTIANITY
- ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE ARMED FORCES
- CULTURAL IMPERIALISM
- DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENT
- DREADLOCKS
- ETHNIC POLICY
- ETHNOCENTRISM IN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE
- ETHNOCIDE
- FOOD AS A WEAPON
- HANDICAPISM
- HATE CRIMES
- HATE GROUPS
- HOLOCAUST, ROMANI (1933-1945)
- INTERRACIAL FRIENDSHIP
- LA PENCA, NICARAGUA, BOMBING, MAY 30, 1984
- MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION
- NATIONALITY POLICY
- NAZI COLLABORATORS
- NAZIS
- NAZI FUGITIVES
- NAZI HUNTERS
- NEOCOLONIALISM
- NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER
- NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER
- NONALIGNED MOVEMENT
- NONRACIST CHILDREN’S LITERATURE
- NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS
- PALESTINIAN STATE (PROPOSED)
- RACISM IN BIOLOGY
- RACISM IN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE
- RACISM IN CHRISTIANITY
- RACISM IN EMPLOYMENT
- RACISM IN HOUSING
- RACISM IN LAW
- REAGAN DOCTRINE
- SKINHEADS
- THIRD WORLD LITERATURE
- TRAIL OF BROKEN TREATIES, 1972
- VIOLENCE AGAINST GAY MEN & LESBIANS
- VIOLENCE AGAINST MINORITIES
"The mine is a tomb and once the earth gets over you, it's hard to hump up and cast it off. It crushes them all in the end" from The Disinherited

On February 28, 1990 one of America's great radical writers died. Jack Conroy's life began in America's heartland. His writing sprang from his own experiences as an ordinary laborer trying to eke out a living during the early days of the Depression. Born in 1899 in the Monkey Nest Coal Camp near Moberly, Missouri, Conroy experienced firsthand the effects of joblessness, poverty and hunger on the human spirit. After his father and two half-brothers were killed working in the coal mines, Jack spent his and twenties and thirties searching for work; riding the rails for short-lived dangerous industrial jobs in mills and factories. A fellow laborer introduced him to the work of H. L. Mencken. Soon after Conroy began writing poetry and fiction, turning his struggle to survive into art. In 1933, his first novel, The Disinherited was published. In simple vivid language, The Disinherited brought alive the world of the exploited American worker of the 1920's and 30's; the grinding poverty, the dangerous working conditions in the coal mines, mills and factories, and the efforts of working people to organize themselves.

I wanted to be a witness to the times, to show how it feels to be without work and with no prospect of any, and with the imminent fear of starvation, to move people to think about those things, and, what was more important to move people to do something about it.

Although well received at the time, The Disinherited became a neglected classic but was reissued in 1963 and then again in 1982 and is used today in labor history classes for its graphic account of the terrors of the depression. Jack Conroy went on to produce an impressive body of work. In 1935 his second novel, A World to Win was published. In the early 1930's Conroy was the editor of The Rebel Poet, and later of The Anvil, two publications which featured the work of radical writers such as; Meridel Le Sueur, Langston Hughes, Erskine Caldwell, Frank Yerby, Richard Wright, William Carlos Williams, Nelson Algren, and Conroy, himself. In 1936 Conroy worked on the Missouri Writers Project until the efforts of the writers to organize a union fell through. He joined Nelson Algren on the Illinois Writers Project in 1938 and collaborated with Arna Bontemps on a study of Black History which produced They Seek a City (1944) and Anyplace But Here (1966). The two men also wrote several children's books based on industrial folk narratives including the classic, The Fast Sooner Hound. In 1966 Jack Conroy retired to Moberly living close to where he was born. He continued to write until a few years ago when physical limitations made it impossible. In 1985 a collection of his work, The Weed King and Other Stories was published. He remained a critic of the American political scene commenting caustically that President Reagan's solution to today's disinherited seemed to be similar to Herbert Hoover's. He considered himself to be a rebel of the left and proudly called himself a political anarchist. Reading his stories and sketches of the 1920's and 30's which so urgently present the desperation of the poor as they struggled against society's injustices is like looking into a mirror which reflects the faces of today's homeless as they stand on the long lines in New York, California, Illinois or Missouri waiting for a meal, a bed, or a chance at a job. His writing stands today as part of our national literary heritage. When asked in the early 1970's what advice he would give to a young writer of today, Jack Conroy responded,

Write as lucidly, strongly, and truthfully as you can about things that are close to your heart. Hew to the line; let the chips fall where they may. And, as a parting injunction: Non carborundum illegitimi. If your Latin is a bit rusty, I'll translate this for you as: Don't let the bastards grind you down. 2

You didn't Jack. We'll miss you.

Notes


NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Sanford Berman is head cataloger at the Hennepin County Public Library in Minnetonka, Minnesota.

Harriet Gottfried is a librarian in the Office for Adult Services with New York Public Library.

Elaine Harger is the librarian at Empire State College/SUNY, School of Labor Studies in New York City.

Al Kagan is a reference librarian at the Homer Babbidge Library, University of Connecticut at Storrs.

Peter McDonald is a reference librarian at the New York Public Library’s main research library.

Christopher Merrett is deputy university librarian at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Dennis A. Mumble is assistant director for the Academic Foundation Dept. of Rutgers University in New Jersey and former national secretary of the National Alliance of Third World Journalists.

Corinne Nyquist is the inter-library loan librarian at the Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY-New Paltz.

Joseph Reilly is a recent library school graduate, long-time anti-apartheid activist and is PLG’s regular liaison with the ANC. He lives in Philadelphia.

Mark Rosenzweig is a reference librarian in the Business Collection of the Mid-Manhattan Branch of the New York Public Library.

Salwa Shamy is wrapping up an MLS at Rutgers University in New Jersey and is a graduate assistant at the Library of Science and Medicine.

Elliott Shore is library director at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.
PLG STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (DRAFT)

The Library has long been assumed to be the bastion of liberty and learning, where people are free to reflect on the past and converse with the present in one of the few settings where commercial speech is muted. Signaled by the change in the name of what we do from librarianship to "information management," we may be giving up our professional responsibility to protect free public access to the knowledge generated in this society. We also seem to be forgetting that the library is an agent of democratic education and cultural development, and have instead embraced unthinking the idea that libraries must transform themselves into "competitors" in the "information marketplace."

We must dedicate ourselves to the renewal of the democratic ethos of library service, combat the attacks on library service that emanate from the various sectors of the information industry and work to restore libraries as socially progressive educational institutions. We must attempt to make known and to change the disparities of information provision for different sectors of our society and oppose and attempt to roll back the pervasive imposition of fees for library service. Above all, we will dispute the claim for the library as a neutral, non-political organization that serves best when preserving the status quo, and attempt to renew the library as an agent for progressive social change.

To accomplish these goals we have established this organization. Its purpose will be to:

Provide a forum for the open exchange of radical views on library issues

Conduct campaigns to support progressive and democratic library activities locally, nationally and internationally

Defend activist librarians as they work to effect changes in their own libraries and communities

Bridge the artificial and destructive gap within our profession between school, public, academic, and special libraries

Encourage the debate about prevailing management strategies adopted directly from the business world and propose democratic forms of library administration

Consider the impact of technological change in the library workplace and on the provision of library service

Monitor the professional ethics of librarianship from a socially responsible perspective

Facilitate contacts between progressive librarians and other professional and scholarly groups dealing with communications worldwide