

V. Education and training

1. The state and media institutions shall provide facilities for the training and upgrading of media-workers.
2. In the provision of skills, account shall be taken of the need for affirmative action in favour of those who, because of racial, gender and other discriminatory practices, are disadvantaged.
3. Training programmes shall include mechanisms aimed at empowering communities in their endeavours to publish and broadcast.
4. As part of civic education programmes, the state and media institutions shall strive to inform citizens about their media rights and those of media-workers.

VI. Promotional mechanisms

1. In order to promote and monitor the realisation of these freedoms independent structures shall be set up for defined sectors of the media.
2. These structures shall be representative of media-workers, workers, political parties, civil society, relevant experts and others.
3. Where codes of conduct are necessary to ensure the implementation of the above principles, these shall be drawn up in a democratic process involving the various media role players.
4. An ombudsperson shall be appointed to receive and act on complaints relating to the infringement of the above principles; and such an appointment shall also take place through a democratic process.
5. Society shall have the right to challenge decisions of all these structures and persons in a court of law.

Recognising the centrality of these media principles to a democratic process and recognising the need for a democratic environment for these principles to be fully realised, we pledge to join hands in the effort to create a society in which the free flow of information and open debate are guaranteed, a society which is at peace with itself.

From: *Media Development*, vol.39, no.2, 1992, United Kingdom, p.41.

RESOLUTION ON *NEW STATESMAN AND SOCIETY* DEFENSE

WHEREAS, the British socialist journal *New Statesman and Society* (NSS), presently celebrating its eightieth year of publication since its founding by G. B. Shaw and Sidney and Beatrice Webb and today one of the most internationally esteemed journals of Left opinion and analysis, has been sued for libel by Prime Minister John Major and Ms. Clare Latimer in a action whose settlement threatens the continued existence of the magazine and is an attack on freedom of information; and

WHEREAS, the offending article was a report in the January 29 issue on the widespread media rumor campaign concerning Mr. Major's association with a woman alleged to be his "mistress", a campaign which the NSS, by openly discussing the assorted allegations in some detail and "naming names", showed to be unfounded; and

WHEREAS, Major and Latimer pursued their campaign against NSS despite the fact that the article unambiguously states the rumors are unfounded and false, and despite the fact that the editors, through their solicitors, issued a letter of regret for any personal distress caused by the publication of the article and agreed to, if necessary, help vindicate Major's and Latimer's reputations; and

WHEREAS, the Prime Minister and Ms. Latimer, taking advantage of Britain's archaic libel laws, had the issue containing the article withdrawn from circulation and sued the printers, distributors and wholesalers of the magazine, who are indemnified against this kind of action by NSS, for over 150,000 pounds; and

WHEREAS, British libraries also are under apparent threat of legal action for the display of the January 29 issue, a threat under which many are acceding to censorship; and

WHEREAS, the attack on NSS is aimed at the radical press as a whole and is, while legal, an unconscionable assault on free access to information, opinion and argument; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that PLG/SRRT condemns British Prime Minister John Major for pursuing a libel suit against the radical magazine

New Statesman and Society, an effort which has constituted a serious attack on freedom of the press; and be it further

RESOLVED, that PLG/SRRT supports the *New Statesman and Society Defence Fund* set up to pay legal fees and the indemnities on damages won by Major and his co-litigant Clare Latimer, and which is fighting to change the British libel laws so that the threat of lawsuits is not used to squelch the free press and stamp out what little dissidence and diversity there is in the media; and be it further

RESOLVED, that PLG/SRRT opposes reported British library censorship of the January 29, 1993 issue of *New Statesman and Society* even if done in anticipation of possible legal action; and be it further

RESOLVED, that PLG/SRRT calls on the ALA membership, Council and appropriate committees to join with us in endorsing the above resolution and in expressing solidarity with *New Statesman and Society*, on this their eightieth anniversary, in their campaign to protect the rights to free press and dissent.

Passed by Progressive Librarians Guild and ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table and tabled by ALA Council during ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, June/July 1993.

MANIFESTO OF AVANT-GARDE LIBRARIANSHIP

1.

Shake in your shoes bureaucrats! The time has come for a realization of the theory-death of the librarian, embodied in the revolutionary struggle for liberation from this odious society.

2.

The weapons of contestation at our disposal have so far been exposed as inadequate. We must forge new tools from extreme sources.

3.

The revolutionary theory developed by the various avant-garde tendencies of this century has had no influence within our miserable milieu. We must resuscitate ourselves before we die of boredom.

4.

The poverty of library theory is everywhere apparent. Are we to be just another branch of the bureaucratic management of coffee-table knowledge? Are we the soft police of social consciousness?

5.

As usual it has been left to those outside our so called "profession" to open our eyes. Our rationales are fragmenting on the road to ruin. What should we do? Celebrate!

6.

The librarian is the narrator of a story that has lost its authority, the complacent host of a canon now exploded.

7.

The classifications we invented now reinvent us daily, we are losing control as control leads us, inevitably, to more control. Our rules have been turned upon us and we have been sentenced to an eternity of silence.