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# ALA, IFLA, and Israel/Palestine

## Introduction: U.S. Activism Around Palestinian Issues

The need for actions around Israel/Palestine is as current today as ever. In the light of Israel's latest massive attack on Gaza in the summer of 2014 and recent Israeli elections, this is an important moment to reexamine the ALA and IFLA history around the situation in Israel/Palestine. As media activist and author Bob McChesney says, the mainstream media rarely discusses issues unless the Democrats and Republicans weigh in. The Israeli electorate's continuing and increasing turn to the hard right has now provoked a very public argument between President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, as well as the U.S. Democratic Party and the State of Israel. Netanyahu's election eve statement declaring an end to his nominal support for a two-state solution and his racist words against a large voting turnout by Arab citizens of Israel have blown whatever was left of the polite veneer over the brutal policies already in-place. All of a sudden the mainstream media is actually discussing the relationship between the United States and Israel. This public debate will certainly have effects within the U.S. and Israeli publics, and likely help educate many more people about the brutal effects of the Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. And ALA Council normally follows U.S. public opinion.

In addition, the current controversy adds to a very real shift of U.S. public opinion toward Israel over the last twenty years or so, especially within the U.S. Jewish community. The rise of the lobbying groups, Jewish Voice for Peace in

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1996 and J Street in 2008 (“Pro-Israel and Pro-Peace”), are a good indication of this shift.

Librarians have pressed ALA to confront Israeli government censorship and the destruction of Palestinian libraries and culture since 1984.<sup>1</sup> Organizing around Israel/Palestine issues has always been tough for U.S. progressives. There is perhaps no more difficult foreign policy topic due to the very close political, military, and economic alliance between the U.S. and Israeli governments and their connections with transnational corporations. This results in a U.S. mainstream media perspective that historically has nearly always parroted the U.S. government. Further, memories of the Holocaust still permeate public opinion, and there is a powerful Israel lobby consisting of both Jewish and Christian evangelical Zionists, who have their established and influential lobbying arms, such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), B’nai B’rith, Hadassah Women’s Zionist Organization of America, and Christians United for Israel. Israel is often characterized as the only democracy in a “sea of Arab dictatorships.” As a result, note that current fallout from the Israeli elections has so far had zero effect on U.S. military and economic aid to Israel.

Some have asked SRRT over the years why it has concentrated on specific countries, especially Israel. The logic is very simple, as taxpayers our money is funding wars and atrocities. We therefore have a direct connection to these policies. The hope is that if a grassroots movement could mobilize enough support, it might be possible to change U.S. policies. From 1949 to 2013, the U.S. government has given more than \$130 billion in direct aid to Israel, and has spent about \$3 trillion on the Israel-Palestine conflict (through 2002). This is more than four times the cost of the Viet Nam War.<sup>2</sup>

And there are more reasons to focus on Israel/Palestine, including a close parallel with South Africa.<sup>3</sup> Depending on how one counts, the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories is either the longest or second longest current occupation of another people’s land.<sup>4</sup> The occupation is also noteworthy because of Israel’s attempt to destroy much of the people’s culture and history, many even going so far as to argue that Palestinians are not even a separate people. And although mainstream U.S. opinion-makers try to debunk the term, Israel has indeed established a kind of apartheid regime in the West Bank, with separate roads and amenities for Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>5</sup>

Progressive librarians organized through the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) and the Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) have faced the same obstacles as other progressives who have tried to lobby for a U.S. policy based on justice and respect for all who live in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Progressive librarians have had only fleeting success in organizing around ALA’s core principle of freedom of expression, and faced a coordinated national backlash from the Israel lobby as described below.

## The Censorship Situation from the 1930s to the 1980s

The first ALA controversies around Israel/Palestine addressed censorship. In 1991, the American Library Association published in coordination with Article 19, the International Centre on Censorship, an annual report titled *Information Freedom and Censorship*.<sup>6</sup> The eight-page section on “Israel and the Occupied Territories”<sup>7</sup> described that year’s stringent actions within Israel and its brutal military rule of the West Bank and Gaza. For Israel itself, the report noted that censorship is based on the Press Ordinance of 1933, with “draconian powers of censorship.” Permits were required to publish, which could be suspended or withdrawn at any time, and pre-publication censorship was authorized. The Israeli Hebrew press formed an Editors’ Committee in 1948 for the purpose of self-censorship. Radio and television had “consensual censorship.” Even a Hebrew song was banned in 1991. There were increasingly harsh measures for covering the Intifada. Many Israeli Hebrew journalists were arrested, imprisoned, beaten by soldiers, and ordered dismissed from their jobs that year. Joint Israeli-Palestinian enterprises were especially targeted. Several journalists also resigned in the face of these restrictions. Israel also tried to prevent publication of a book about Mossad, its intelligence agency, in Canada and the U.S.

In 1991, Gaza and the West Bank were under the rule of the Israeli military. Many major Palestinian publications were based in East Jerusalem, which was technically considered within Israel (annexed in 1967), but were treated much more harshly than Israeli publications. Censorship had increased since the 1987 Intifada. Six Palestinian press offices were closed that year. It had become difficult to get a license to publish, and the possession of an unlicensed publication could result in heavy fines and imprisonment. Palestinian journalists estimated that 60 percent of their original material was partially or totally cut by the prepublication censor. In addition, fax machines were banned in Gaza from 1987 to 1989 and phone lines were frequently cut. About 10,000 books were banned. About 30 percent of the members of the Palestinian journalists association had been detained or put under administrative restrictions. Fifty-six Palestinian journalists were deported from 1987 to 1991, and some had been fired upon in their homes. In addition, more than fifty Palestinian writers and poets had been detained, and many were prohibited from entering East Jerusalem. Since the Intifada, Israel had used collective punishment to close universities and educational institutions; 35,000 students were affected. In response, Palestinians organized Popular Education Committees but the Israeli authorities labeled them “cells of illegal teaching.” There were about 150 “incidents” against foreign journalists by the Israeli authorities in the Occupied Territories from 1987 to 1991, including physical attacks, short-term detentions, blacklisting, and confiscation of equipment.

## ALA Response to Censorship in Israel/Palestine

Although ALA Council first addressed censorship in Israel/Palestine in 1984, this action was based on the adoption of the policy on Freedom of Expression for Foreign Nationals at the 1974 Annual Conference in New York City. This preceding resolution was jointly sponsored by the Council's Intellectual Freedom (IFC) and International Relations Committees (IRC). The policy was based on Article 19 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to see, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.<sup>8</sup>

This policy was adopted to regularize such concerns after approving resolutions put forward by the Intellectual Freedom Committee at the ALA Midwinter meeting on January 25, 1974, dealing with suppression of Portuguese poems, harassment of Soviet author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the burning of books in Chile.<sup>9</sup>

ALA Council first addressed Israel/Palestine only tangentially when it reaffirmed the 1974 policy on Freedom of Expression of Foreign Nationals in 1984.<sup>10</sup> This resolution only mentioned the Occupied Territories in a whereas clause, not a resolved clause. As opposed to resolved clauses, whereas clauses are normally used for background information and do not require any official actions. Since only the resolved clauses are codified, this language disappeared from view. That clause stated that concerning the "occupied area of the West Bank of the Jordan" the IFC and the IRC had been "...unable to ascertain the details of such constraints, but are convinced that there must be some inequity..."

It was later disclosed that the 1984 resolution was motivated by an inquiry from a "Chicago-area librarian."<sup>11</sup> This turned out to be David Williams, who was to play a key role in the forthcoming debates. The early 1990s struggles within ALA were foreshadowed by a prelude at the Chicago Public Library (CPL). In 1989, David Williams, CPL Middle East Bibliographer, developed a scholarly bibliography on the Palestine and Israel conflict. The virulence of the U.S. Zionist lobby first appeared in the library world when the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) told CPL's head librarian, Samuel Morrison, that the bibliography was biased. Morrison investigated and found nothing wrong with it. But the ADL with the help of the Jewish Community Relations Council persisted with a campaign to the CPL administration and Board. They produced a 19-page criticism of the bibliography. Morrison then sent the bibliography to

four branch library heads for review. Again, they found nothing wrong, but two of them suggested adding a few more Zionist titles.

The ADL then intensified its campaign with letters to aldermen in Jewish neighborhoods. By January 1990, Morrison offered a compromise, that he would update the bibliography. The ADL then demanded including 38 specific pro-Zionist titles and prohibiting Williams from working on this and future reading lists. By mid-January, the CPL gave up and agreed to include 30 titles selected by the ADL. But the ADL's tactics became public in a column by Dennis Byrne in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The public, including many educators and librarians, responded with numerous letters condemning the ADL, and finally the ADL let the matter drop.<sup>12</sup> Although the profession was able to defend itself in this initial local campaign, the struggle was soon to hit the national stage.

David Williams again brought the issues around censorship in Israel and Palestine to ALA at the January 1990 ALA Midwinter Meeting. This resulted in the formation of an ALA International Relations Committee (IRC) Subcommittee on Alleged Banning of Palestinian and Arab Books and Journals in the Israeli Occupied Territories. By May the subcommittee reported that the documentation submitted was biased and did not take into account the unique historical circumstances of Israel.<sup>13</sup> But this finding was just a way for the Subcommittee to avoid the issues. The documentation supplied was indeed reputable, as was demonstrated by the 1991 Article 19 report published that year by ALA itself as noted above!

The SRRT International Human Rights Task Force, Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) and other groups held a forum at DePaul University in Chicago in conjunction with the 1990 ALA Annual Conference,<sup>14</sup> and the SRRT Action Council passed a resolution calling on Israel "to abide by universally recognized norms of intellectual freedom and human rights."<sup>15</sup> The ALA International Relations Committee (IRC) was not satisfied with its Subcommittee's report and established a second subcommittee to investigate the issues. The International Relations Round Table and ACRL Asian and African Section also put these issues on their agendas.<sup>16</sup>

To further discuss the issues, the 1991 SRRT International Human Rights Task Force (IHRTF) program in Atlanta featured Josepha Pick, an Israeli Jewish lawyer, librarian, and human rights activist.<sup>17</sup> SRRT Action Council's resolution condemning censorship and library closings in the Occupied Territories was considered by the IRC, which is a committee of the ALA Council. The IRC watered it down and presented their version to the Council. It was then further weakened in the Council debate. The Council rendered the resolution meaningless by even removing the term "Occupied Territories," which some considered "Israel bashing." In its final form, it became a bland resolution against censorship and library closures in the Middle East with very little

effect. In an “On My Mind” column for *American Libraries*, Zoia Horn asked, “Why doesn’t ALA treat Israeli censorship in the same way it treats that of other nations?” and “The evasion within ALA of an open discussion of the issue of Israeli censorship practices in the Occupied Territories should end.”<sup>18</sup> In order to promote more dialog and fact-finding, library historian Don Davis offered to lead a SRRT travel seminar to Israel and the Occupied Territories for October 1992, but the idea never came to fruition.<sup>19</sup>

The 1992 IHRTF program in San Francisco was titled “Twenty-Five Years of Military Occupation: Intellectual Freedom Cases Arising Out of the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict.” The speakers were Michal Schwarz who was arrested when her leftist newspaper (*Challenge*) was closed by the Israeli government; Khader Hamide, a Palestinian living in the U.S. who was one of the “LA Eight” and jailed for being affiliated with the Palestine liberation movement; and Ghazi Falah, a geographer whose library card was revoked at Haifa University when his work was questioned based on his politics.<sup>20</sup> As with previous Task Force programs, the Israeli Consulate and the Anti-Defamation League were invited to speak but declined. However, Dror Greenfield of Geffen Publishing in Jerusalem defended the Israeli government from the floor.<sup>21</sup> The meeting was marred by attempts at disruption, including a fire alarm, however the program was successful. It went an extra hour until 11 pm, and was covered by all the main library journals.

SRRT’s efforts paid off. Wide majorities at the packed ALA Membership Meeting and then the ALA Council passed SRRT’s 1992 resolutions on Israeli Censorship and support for deported West Bank librarian Omar al-Safi! The general resolution read:

Resolved, That the ALA calls upon the government of Israel to end all censorship and human rights violations in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza and in Israel itself, and, be it further

Resolved, That the ALA encourages representatives of the Israeli and Palestinian people in the quest for a peaceful and just solution to their conflict; and, be it further

Resolved, That ALA encourages its members to develop ways to support librarians, journalists, educators and others working for peace, human rights and freedom of information and expression in the Middle East and that the International Relations Committee (IRC) be asked to develop strategies towards these ends; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be sent to the Israeli government, U.S. State Department, the United Nations, the Article 19 organization, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).<sup>22</sup>

## SRRT Tensions, the Backlash, and ALA Council's Reversal

It is not surprising that SRRT did not take on these issues until 1990. There are at least three reasons: U.S. popular support for a Jewish homeland due to the atrocities of the Holocaust, U.S. government massive military/economic/political support for all Israeli governments, and U.S. mainstream media's continuous influential lockstep ideological support for U.S. government positions on Israel/Palestine. It has been nearly impossible to get a hearing for alternative viewpoints in mainstream American venues. And without David Williams' persistence, it is unlikely that the SRRT Action Council would have addressed these issues for many more years. Given SRRT's core values and such terrible injustice, it was impossible to refuse engagement when Williams challenged the Action Council to respond. Even so, a number of Action Councilors undertook the struggle with a heavy heart aware that they were confronting extremely powerful forces. Others were more optimistic.

Tensions within the SRRT Action Council and its International Human Rights Task Force (IHRTF) were also brewing. Although there were a number of Jewish librarians working on the issue (especially Sandy Berman, Mark Rosenzweig, and Al Kagan), one or two Jewish SRRT activists were very uncomfortable in dealing with Israel from the beginning of the campaign. As time went on, David William's leadership also became a critical issue. In order to try to reduce internal tensions within the IHRTF, the SRRT Action Council tentatively approved the creation of a new specific Task Force on Israeli Censorship and Palestinian Libraries, which was formalized at the 1993 Midwinter Meeting.<sup>23</sup>

SRRT's victory in passing the 1992 resolution through the ALA Council was immediately under attack. Nancy John, chair of the International Relations Committee, issued a summary for the ALA Executive Board of the IRC's Fall Orientation/Planning Meeting of October 17, 1992. Most of the report concerned the above resolution. In her report, she described it as "fundamentally flawed" and "inflammatory." She complained that directly addressing foreign governments could possibly be "dangerous" for the Association, and she was upset about what she somehow considered lack of IRC input. Most pointedly, she called for rescinding the resolution and drafting a new one to replace it.<sup>24</sup> In addition, ALA's attorney remarked that the resolution was close to being "seditious."<sup>25</sup> In response, David Williams issued a statement at the Midwinter 1993 Meeting in Denver on behalf of the International Human Rights Task Force urging the ALA Council against following the IRC's proposal.<sup>26</sup> The IRC then moved and Council approved an "amendment" to the previous resolution referring it back to the IRC for study and recommendations and advising all parties noted in the last resolved clause that the resolution was under review.<sup>27</sup>

SRRT's victory was short-lived. The Anti-Defamation League, Hadassah, and other groups counter-organized in a big way. SRRT Coordinator Stephen Stillwell noted ADL intimidation tactics at the 1993 Midwinter Meeting in Denver; an ADL representative took hold of his conference badge pinned to his jacket to copy down his name and affiliation.<sup>28</sup> Others had the same experience. Williams alleged that the ALA Office gave free guest registration to ADL representatives to pack the meetings. Helen S. Kohlman, lawyer, library trustee, and head of the 1000-member New Orleans Hadassah chapter held a cocktail party at her home with ALA officials just before the 1993 Annual Conference.<sup>29</sup> More than 1500 people flooded the ALA Membership Meeting in New Orleans on June 28, 1993. The ALA Membership Meeting voted to overturn the resolution, and this motion was then automatically forwarded to the Council. This organized backlash succeeded; it was a rare instance of the Council revoking its previous resolution.<sup>30</sup>

Further, there was open talk about abolishing SRRT. ALA President Marilyn Miller summoned SRRT Coordinator Stephen Stillwell to a private meeting in that regard. And Stillwell and Task Force Chair David Williams were summoned to the ALA Executive Board. Although not an ALA Councilor, this author as a SRRT Action Councilor was allowed to defend SRRT at an ALA Council Meeting, and pleaded to let SRRT attend to its own task forces. ALA president Marilyn Miller then created a special "fact-finding" "Task Force on the Conduct of ALA Meetings and ALA Values" to investigate the SRRT Task Force on Israeli Censorship and Palestinian Libraries. Councilor Herb Biblio called the creation of the presidential task force a witch-hunt, and Norman Horrocks pointed out that parent bodies were responsible for their own subunits according to ALA policy. When the Council did not support Miller's action, she disbanded her task force.<sup>31</sup>

### **David Williams and SRRT Internal Dynamics**

As IHRTF chair, David Williams initially seemed amiable and responsible. But as time went on, Williams became confrontational and inflammatory, even with SRRT supporters, and his leadership became an overriding issue.<sup>32</sup> These tensions escalated and were detailed in Williams' 1992 report, where he complained about criticism from Al Kagan, Sandy Berman, and Nancy Gruber.<sup>33</sup> Note that as secular Jews, Kagan and Berman had fully supported the campaign.

Correspondence between Williams and Action Council members during the rest of 1992 and spring 1993 were heated.<sup>34</sup> He was urged not to chair the new Task Force on Israeli Censorship and Palestinian Libraries, but refused to withdraw.<sup>35</sup> SRRT Coordinator Stephen Stillwell admonished him for personal attacks on himself and other Action Council members (including this author).<sup>36</sup>



Williams was also severely criticized for issuing statements that appeared to represent ALA as an organization, rather than only the IHRTF or the SRRT Action Council.<sup>37</sup>

Sandy Berman sent an open letter on December 30, 1993. He wrote that, “David Williams should be applauded for raising and doggedly pursuing the issue of Israeli censorship. However, the applause ends there.” He explained that, “... Williams repeatedly practiced deceit, manipulation, abuse, and scapegoating,” and that he was “...almost unaccountable to the Task Force membership.” Berman noted that the Task Force, “...admonished him to temper his language and stop his ad hominem, vindictive attacks against adversaries.” Berman wrote that Williams was “committed to an ‘end-justifies-the-means’ brand of politics,” and “...while Williams may not himself be an anti-Semite, he certainly sounds like one...”

The SRRT Action Council refused to approve the Task Force’s 1994 budget request of \$1900, and requested the Task Force members to vote on whether to retain Williams as their coordinator. However he was subsequently re-elected.<sup>38</sup> Mark Rosenzweig observed that Williams was now obsessed with trying to thoroughly discredit SRRT as agents of Israeli censorship. Williams stated that he wanted SRRT to be dissolved so that a grassroots alternative could take its place.<sup>39</sup> Action Council responded to Williams’ conduct by censuring Williams at the 1994 Annual Meeting, and prohibited him from holding any SRRT office for three years because of personal attacks and undermining SRRT’s ideals and goals.<sup>40</sup> The Task Force on Israeli Censorship and Palestinian Libraries was disbanded.<sup>41</sup> These actions placated the ALA Executive Board and ALA Council, but SRRT suffered for many years from the bitterness caused by this campaign.<sup>42</sup>

Addressing injustices in Israel/Palestine is incredibly difficult in the U.S., and calls for a reasoned approach. SRRT was forced to remove Williams from the leadership because of his obnoxious behavior, not the merits of the campaign.<sup>43</sup> As Sandy Berman described, it “...provoked amazement, discomfort, anger, and explicit charges of anti-Semitism.”<sup>44</sup> SRRT was right on the issues, and even reaffirmed its stand with another resolution in June 1993. SRRT also tried to rebut the claim that it was “singling out Israel” by putting forward a resolution on Egyptian censorship, but the ALA Membership Meeting defeated this effort.<sup>45</sup>

### **Aid to Libraries, Reconstruction, and Reading in the 1990s and 2000s**

After the censure of Williams, SRRT activities turned from censorship to trying to provide material aid and reconstruction assistance to Palestinian libraries. In 1994, the SRRT International Responsibilities Task Force supported a book drive led by Margo Brault at the Louisiana State University Library for

a health sciences library in Gaza.<sup>46</sup> Elaine Harger was the SRRT contact. Brault subsequently reported that the Library was pleased to receive several boxes of useful books. In November 1997, under the auspices of the Near East and South Asia Subcommittee of the IRC, Ravi N. Sharma (Library Director at West Virginia State College) and Ron Chepesiuk (Head of Special Collections at Winthrop University in South Carolina) met with President Yasser Arafat in Gaza on the PLO's plan for a national library and the need for international assistance for Palestinian libraries. They presented a 102-page consultancy report to Arafat on April 13, 1998. Sharma took his aid proposal to the IRC, which endorsed it in a resolution for the ALA Council at the 1998 Annual Conference. The ACRL Asian, African and Middle East Section and the ACRL International Relations Committee also signed on. However the last Council meeting finished before getting to the item.

In September 1998, Margo Brault again contacted Elaine Harger about supporting the Gaza Health Sciences Library campaign. The SRRT Action Council endorsed Sharma's 1998 aid proposal as represented in the IRC resolution at its meeting on February 1, 1999. However, this author could not find any documentation that the matter came back to the ALA Council at the Midwinter 1999 meeting.<sup>47</sup>

In the spring of 2002, the so-called Israeli Defense Force again attacked the West Bank population and infrastructure. Under the pretense of hunting for militants and weapons, they killed several hundred people and severely damaged all of the Palestinian government ministries and other state structures, and most of the cultural institutions including libraries and NGO offices. They also destroyed thousands of homes, including more than 1000 in the Jenin Refugee Camp. Of particular note was damage to perhaps the most important Palestinian cultural institution, the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center in Ramallah. There was systematic destruction of government records, including files on one million students as well as land claims and registration files. Palestinians charged Israel with trying to wipe out Palestinian history. The Palestinian Legislative Council meeting hall was destroyed as well as the compound of President Yasser Arafat. One of Palestine's foremost poets, Zakaria Mohammed said, "Everything we have built up in the eight years after Oslo is now being destroyed."<sup>48</sup> Physical damage was estimated at \$361 million.<sup>49</sup> A summary document developed by Tom Twiss for the SRRT International Responsibilities Task Force (IRTF) noted damage or destruction of eleven nongovernmental archives and libraries and eighteen governmental libraries, archives, or files in government buildings.<sup>50</sup>

Twiss developed several more documents for SRRT lobbying purposes.<sup>51</sup> SRRT brought a "Resolution on the Destruction of Palestinian Libraries, Archives, and Other Cultural Resources" to the ALA Membership Meeting at the 2002 Annual Conference, however it could not be voted due to lack of a quorum.<sup>52</sup> The resolution was endorsed by the Near East and South Asia

Subcommittee of the ALA International Relations Committee (IRC), but the full IRC completely reworked and watered it down to the point of meaninglessness when it struck all mention of Israel or ALA assistance. The ALA Council then deleted the resolved clause from the revision, which listed where the resolution should be distributed, and passed that version.<sup>53</sup> Some Palestinian institutions, including Bethlehem University, applauded the strong SRRT resolution and weak ALA version including Bethlehem University. Although many in the U.S. saw the horror of these brutal attacks through US media coverage, there was predictable outrage from some Israeli and American Zionist commentators and institutions.<sup>54</sup>

ALA's Midwinter 2009 meeting took place just after another Israeli attack on Gaza, named Operation Cast Lead. At least two municipal libraries, and the libraries of the Islamic University and the Tal el-Hawa branch of the al-Aqsa University were severely damaged. And the Jawaharlal Nehru Library at al-Azhar University, donated by the Indian government, was also destroyed. The headquarters of the University Teacher Association-Palestine and a brand new Gaza Music School in the premises of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society were bombed, and a U.N. compound and a hospital were attacked with phosphorus explosives. At least 1400 Palestinians were killed and 6000 injured.<sup>55</sup> This period saw the beginning of a movement for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) in the U.S. and Canada.<sup>56</sup>

SRRT mobilized with two resolutions. Elaine Harger wrote one that would have established an ALA Gaza reading group to select a book to be discussed at the 2009 Annual Conference in Chicago. It was heavily defeated in the ALA Council.<sup>57</sup> This author was shocked by the nastiness of the debate. One unthinking councilor actually claimed that SRRT was supporting Hamas! SRRT's main resolution was on the connection between the recent Gaza conflict and libraries. It built on ALA's 2002 resolution. It emphasized the massive death and destruction caused by U.S. weapons used by Israel, and called for the protection of libraries and archives in Gaza, and for the U.S. government to work for an immediate permanent ceasefire, and to work toward disarmament in the region. However, it was gutted by the IRC before coming to the Council. The Council then added the words "continue working" to completely change the meaning of the remaining resolved clause which was, "Calls on the U.S. government to work for a permanent peace in the region." It now read, "Calls on the U.S. government to continue working for a permanent peace in the region," as if the U.S. government was doing that all along!<sup>58</sup>

At the July 2009 Annual Conference in Chicago, SRRT endorsed the Free Gaza Movement's "Right to Read" Campaign. Nobel Prize Laureates Bishop Desmond Tutu and Mairead Maguire as well as Noam Chomsky had endorsed it. The international campaign was launched in partnership with Al-Aqsa University to challenge the Israeli blockade by using boats to deliver textbooks

to Gaza.<sup>59</sup> Leaving from Turkey with a stop in Cyprus, the 6-ship Gaza Freedom Flotilla did not succeed in landing, but was brutally attacked on May 31, 2010 in international waters. Nine international activists were killed and several dozen injured. Israel claimed ten of its soldiers were injured, one seriously. This caused a major diplomatic break between Israel and Turkey.<sup>60</sup>

### **Divestment and the 2014 Massive Attack on Gaza Schools and Libraries<sup>61</sup>**

SRRT bought two resolutions to ALA Council at the 2015 Midwinter Meeting in Chicago. Tom Twiss, co-coordinator of SRRT's International Responsibilities Task Force, deserves the credit for thoroughly researching the matter, drafting both resolutions, and providing extensive source lists, mostly U.N. and newspaper reports, but also a report from the Gaza Ministry of Culture. SRRT's Resolution on ALA Divestment from Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions<sup>62</sup> followed the Presbyterian Church USA's recent divestment of these three corporations because of their involvement in the repression of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This author questioned Rod Hersberger, the Senior Trustee for the ALA Endowment Fund, when he gave his report at the ALA Council/Executive Board/Membership Information Session. It was only then that we realized that ALA was no longer investing in individual stocks, but rather various kinds of mutual and other funds through their investment portfolios. Since this greatly complicates divestment, SRRT decided to withdraw the resolution until we get more specific information on how the Endowment Fund is structured. While withdrawing the resolution on the Council floor, this author asked for that specific information.<sup>63</sup> We were assured by Keith Brown, ALA Senior Financial Analyst, that this was doable, but all we eventually got from Rod Hersberger was a May 2015 Powerpoint presentation that gave the barest possible information.<sup>64</sup> The only significant thing we learned was that the top five portfolio holdings did not include any fossil fuel corporations! (It is amazing that they could not even keep the two divestment proposals straight. SRRT had put forward a membership resolution in 2013 concerning divestment of stocks in "the filthy fifteen," but that resolution also failed.) Since Keith Brown has now left ALA, we have opened communications with Mark Leon, ALA's new Chief Financial Officer.

The Resolution on the Destruction of Libraries and Schools in Gaza in 2014 became the most contentious item at the 2015 Midwinter Meeting.<sup>65</sup> A propaganda campaign that appears to have started with the Association of Jewish Libraries began as soon as we posted both resolutions to the SRRT listserv during the week before Midwinter. This resolution noted past resolutions and detailed either the damage to or the complete destruction of about 270 libraries and 399 schools and kindergartens. Further it explained that many of these U.N. schools were being used to house displaced families, and although the U.N.

gave the locations numerous times to the Israeli military, they were still heavily bombed killing and severely injuring many civilians. The resolution deplored this destruction, called for protection of the libraries and cultural resources of Gaza and support for the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield in upholding the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and called on the U.S. government and other governments, IGOs, and NGOs to help in the reconstruction of these libraries and schools.

It was interesting and frustrating to see how the mood shifted from day to day. Our vocal opponents appeared at both SRRT Action Council meetings, both Council Forums, and the IRC meeting. Councilors were at first noncommittal and asked many questions at the first Council Forum, an informal venue for just this purpose. We were able to answer almost all of the questions and revised the resolution adding some of the requested information. But the hostile IRC completely changed the mood. The two main complaints were that the situation in the Middle East is too complicated for ALA to engage and that the resolution was unbalanced in that Israel was also under attack from rockets fired from Gaza. A number of people spoke against the resolution on the Council floor because they said it singled out Israel, and that there were many other countries where libraries had recently been destroyed. Further they complained that it did not detail attacks on Israeli libraries and schools. However, the situation is not “balanced” on the ground and therefore the resolution could not be balanced. After some research, we have found only a very few cases of attacks on Israeli libraries and schools, and only one in 2014.

One councilor tried to add an amendment deploring the placement of weapons in libraries and schools that made them viable military targets, but this was narrowly defeated. We told the Council that we had no objection to that amendment. One of the arguments against us was that the U.N. had documented three Gaza schools that were used in this way. Our opponents claimed that there were many more. After some debate, only about 14 councilors voted for the resolution. Considering that SRRT had been partially successful in previous years with similar resolutions that were watered down but passed by the ALA Council, it might be useful to consider why this recent effort was a complete failure. The key role played by Hamas in governing Gaza might account for much of the problem. Hamas or its allies did place weapons in several schools, but more importantly our opponents cited the mostly ineffective but voluminous rockets fired indiscriminately at the civilian population in southern Israel. The Israeli government propaganda blitz in the U.S. highlighted these actions, and Hamas certainly got no traction in the U.S. mainstream media. Further, some councilors appeared to suspect that SRRT was actually backing Hamas rather than Gaza’s civilian population, libraries, and schools.

SRRT brought a revised and updated Gaza resolution to the 2015 Annual Conference in San Francisco.<sup>66</sup> The revisions were based on several U.N.

reports that had recently been issued, especially the most comprehensive U.N. Gaza report that was issued just before the Annual Conference.<sup>67</sup> The final total for schools and kindergartens damaged or destroyed was 536 (as opposed to 399 in the January resolution). We also included a whereas clause about the 3 vacant Gaza schools that were used to store weapons of which 2 were likely used for firing weapons, and another clause noting the fact that 3 Israeli schools were hit by rockets fired from Gaza, which resulted in damage to facilities but no fatalities. It seemed that these additions had no effect whatsoever. Although we again sent the resolution to the International Relations Committee before the conference, the IRC again took no action. Only a handful of councilors voted for the resolution on the Council floor.

### **The 2000 IFLA General Conference in Jerusalem**

This article would be incomplete without some discussion of the 2000 Conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in the contested city of Jerusalem, which was entirely occupied by Israel at the time of the meeting.<sup>68</sup> The conference took place in West Jerusalem, which is almost entirely Jewish Israeli and with plenty of affluent neighborhoods. It is worth noting that the Israeli Organizing Committee did not comply with IFLA policies concerning inclusion and against discrimination. IFLA Headquarters asked the Organizing Committee to include representatives of the Palestinian library community in the planning and program, but the opposite occurred, and many librarians from the Global South were either refused entry to the country or had to endure long and difficult immigration and customs interrogations. For example, a funded West African speaker for the Regional Section on Africa was denied a visa. The Arab Federation for Libraries and Information announced a boycott of the Jerusalem conference and held a successful alternative conference at the same time in Cairo, and the National Conference of Palestinian Librarians called on UNESCO to safeguard the cultural identity of Jerusalem. It is also noteworthy that very few librarians from countries with large Muslim populations were in attendance. For example, there were no registrants from Iran, Malaysia, and Pakistan, and only one each from Bangladesh and Indonesia.

U.S. librarians are very prominent in IFLA, and hold many of the key committee and division chairs, as well as seats on the Governing Board. As the world's largest library association by far, ALA pays the highest association dues. Two hundred and sixty-nine U.S. librarians registered for the conference. It is also the case that the U.S. always has one of the largest delegations not counting the host countries. (The Israeli delegation was 400.<sup>69</sup>) In other words, ALA and U.S. librarians are very powerful in IFLA. Traditionally, the Western Europeans have allied with the U.S. and Canada to fundamentally control IFLA

business. It was therefore telling that these powerful players did not intervene to prevent the Israeli Organizing Committee from discriminating against Arab and Muslim majority countries. But on an even more basic level, one must ask the question, why would the IFLA Governing Board decide to hold a meeting in a contested city? Although the IFLA Executive Board claimed that the venue “... does not confer any particular recognition or status of the venue...,” the answer is clearly biased towards the government of Israel.<sup>70</sup>

The Opening and Plenary Session featured an address by Shlomo Avineri, a former Director-General of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>71</sup> He welcomed the participants to the “unified capital of the State of Israel” thus explicitly promoting the politics of the State of Israel. (Note that he spoke in Hebrew instead of one of IFLA’s official languages, so those who did not understand the language and without headphones missed his remarks.) It was also bizarre that the session ended with Israeli peace songs. There was not one word of Arabic or any expression of another side to the story.

This situation was entirely predictable. Ross Shimmon, the IFLA Secretary General, stated that they only learned of the Arab boycott fifteen months before the meeting, but the Palestinians protested the venue four years before the conference. At the closing session, the IFLA President stated that the IFLA Executive Board dissociated itself from the political incidents during the conference claiming that they were beyond the control of the Israeli Organizing Committee.<sup>72</sup> But of course, the Israeli Organizing Committee must have chosen the keynote speaker and could have advised him to speak in English. Although the Israeli Organizing Committee could obviously not control everything at the meeting, they were certainly responsible for major aspects of the program. The IFLA Executive Board’s statement rings hollow.

It may be that the IFLA leaders thought that the Middle East situation would significantly improve at the time they picked Jerusalem for the conference venue in 1995.<sup>73</sup> If so, that was a very naïve failure of judgment. But going forward, it must have become clear that no such peace would emerge. The year before the conference was full of speculation as to whether or not the Palestinians would declare statehood or not in the face of all their frustrations. As we now know, the second Intifada erupted just after the close of the IFLA conference. At some point the IFLA leaders must have realized that they had a serious problem on their hands.

Following up on the conference, the IFLA Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression Committee (FAIFE) promised to send a delegation to Israel and the West Bank to determine what more IFLA could do to ameliorate the situation. That delegation visit finally took place in April 2007, and the IFLA Governing Board accepted its recommendations. They included various kinds of assistance to libraries in the West Bank, a conference outside the region

to foster cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian library communities, and publication of articles describing the effects of the occupation and second Intifada on the library situation in the West Bank. One of the recommendations called for a conference to be held in the Occupied Territories, and the International Conference on Libraries from a Human Rights Perspective was indeed held in Ramallah and East Jerusalem, March 31 to April 2, 2008.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

Very unfortunately, the campaign against Israeli censorship proved to be a major setback, which was used to discredit SRRT initiatives for many years. SRRT lost legitimacy in the eyes of many Councilors and other ALA members. Some ALA Councilors even talked about the need to abolish the Round Table, and the ALA President tried to convene a task force with that purpose in mind.

Further, grassroots and democratic decision-making within ALA was restricted when the Council voted that the ALA Membership Meeting quorum would rise from 200 to 1% of the entire membership (about 660 at that time). This made it impossible to hold an official meeting for many years. However, the meetings were still scheduled and took place, although no voting was allowed. These gatherings lacking a quorum became known as “chats.” SRRT of course lobbied against this change.<sup>75</sup> The Membership Meetings were only restored in 2005, when the quorum was reduced to 75, but the bylaws were changed so that Membership Meetings could no longer override Council votes.<sup>76</sup>

In addition at the Midwinter 1994 Meeting, the Council adopted a policy written by its Committee on Organization (COO), stating that ALA is one association, “legally responsible for the actions of all its subunits.” And therefore if any subunit violated the “ALA Constitution, Bylaws, or Policies,” the Council could invoke sanctions up to the disestablishment of the unit. And that any individual who acted in such a way without the approval of the parent body could be suspended. This was later to become known as the “One Voice Policy.”<sup>77</sup> However, SRRT has never accepted the legitimacy of this policy, and has indeed continued to send out its resolutions at various times.

In any case, there are lessons to be learned from our past organizing efforts. We were clearly not prepared for the massive national mobilization from the mainstream U.S. Zionist organizations in the early 1990s. SRRT was weakened by giving leadership to the wrong person, David Williams, who could not work within ALA or even SRRT structures. Williams’ actions made it easy for the backlash to focus on him and provided a convenient scapegoat for the forces of reaction. But SRRT’s task was nearly impossible in the face of such an organized counter-campaign. SRRT would not have been able to prevent the revocation of the resolution even if it had the most principled and impeccable leadership.



SRRT's more recent Israel/Palestine struggles have resulted in watered down documents and our recent defeat with very little effect for ALA or government policy. We have so far had little success in changing the established paradigm within the ALA leadership and the Council, which has so far only parroted U.S. Government policy. We have had little evident impact on Israeli censorship or aid to libraries, archives, and schools. However, we have done the best we could within the established political context.

We have now faced an even more brutal attack on Gaza schools and libraries during the last summer, but the IRC did not even bother to amend what SRRT presented as it did in 2002 and 2009. ALA Council has abdicated its responsibility by taking no action whatsoever. It is obvious that unless there is a major change in world politics, we will see continuing attacks on Gaza in the future. However, it is also obvious that there is now more general opposition to U.S. policy towards Israel/Palestine within the U.S. population than ever before. The recent hard-right turn of the Netanyahu government and the Obama administration's pushback will probably accelerate this trend. It seems that it is only a matter of time before these trends can bring significant effects, but this is a hard struggle, and it may take a long time to see real changes.

*Al Kagan would like to thank, Elaine Harger, Carol Inskip, Mark Rosenzweig, and Tom Twiss for their extensive comments and editorial advise on several drafts of this article.*

## NOTES

- 1 See also Noha Ismail, "Israeli Censorship in the Occupied Territories," in *Alternative Library Literature: a Biennial Anthology 1990/91* (Phoenix: Oryx, 1992), 79-83.
- 2 Shiril McArthur, "A Conservative Estimate of Total U.S. Direct Aid to Israel: More Than \$130 Billion," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (October/November 2013): 22-24; Thomas R. Stauffer, "The Costs to American Taxpayers of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: \$3 Trillion," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (June 2003): 20-23.
- 3 I intend to write another article on ALA and IFLA's many actions around apartheid South Africa in the near future.
- 4 Western Sahara was a Spanish colony from the late 19th century to 1975 when Morocco and Mauritania took over after the Spanish withdrawal. Because of guerrilla warfare, Mauritania withdrew in 1979, leaving Morocco as the current colonial power with control of about two-thirds of the territory and the rest controlled by the Polisario Front and its guerrilla army.
- 5 For example, Noam Chomsky said, "To call it apartheid is a gift to Israel, at least if by 'apartheid' you mean South African-style apartheid. What's happening in the

- Occupied Territories is much worse. There's a crucial difference. The South African Nationalists needed the black population. That was their workforce. ... The Israeli relationship to the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories is totally different. They just don't want them. They want them out, or at least in prison." See *Democracy Now!*, Aug. 8, 2014, [http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2014/8/8/noam\\_chomsky\\_what\\_israel\\_is\\_doing](http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2014/8/8/noam_chomsky_what_israel_is_doing)
- 6 Article 19, International Centre on Censorship, *Information Freedom and Censorship: World Report 1991* (Chicago: American Library Association and Article 19, International Centre on Censorship, 1991). The report was an annual published by Article 19. ALA only published it that one year.
  - 7 Pages 369-377.
  - 8 "Policy on Abridgement of the Rights of Freedom of Expression of Foreign Nationals," CD 57, July 12, 1974. It took ten more years to codify the policy in the *ALA Policy Manual* as ALA policy 58.3. When the *ALA Policy Manual* was recently reorganized, it became policy B6.2.2.
  - 9 Documents 34 to 36, January 25, 1974.
  - 10 CD 55, June 27, 1984.
  - 11 Letter from Judith F. Krug, Director of ALA Office on Intellectual Freedom, to Stephen Karetzky, Associate Professor, San Jose State University, August 2, 1984, from this author's personal files.
  - 12 Robert Friedman, "The Jewish Thought Police: How the Anti-Defamation League Censors Books and Librarians, and Spies on Citizens," *The Village Voice*, May 11, 1993.
  - 13 Adam Leigh Chandler, "The 1992 American Library Association Resolution on Israeli Censorship and Other Human Rights Violations: A Select Bibliography, Placed in the Context of the Existing Literature on the Relationship between Zionism and U.S. Policy Towards Israel." MLIS Thesis, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1994, p. 1.
  - 14 Speakers included the renowned exiled South African poet and activist Dennis Brutus, Dr. N. Aruri from the boards of Amnesty International and Middle East Watch, Professor Francis Boyle from the University of Illinois, and Mark Rosenzweig.
  - 15 *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 96 (June 1990): 1-3.
  - 16 *Ibid.*, no. 97 (September 1992): 5-6.
  - 17 The 1991 program was originally intended to be a debate, and was initially co-sponsored by the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, but when all the Jewish and Israeli officials refused to participate, the IFRT withdrew its support. See *Sipapu*, 21, no. 2 (1991): 6-12; and 23, no. 1 (1993): 2.
  - 18 1990-91 CD# 43.3, July 2, 1991; Bruce Flanders, "Rallies, Wrangles, and Reads: ALA Annual Conference in Atlanta," *American Libraries* (September 1991): 719; *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 103 (March 1992): 3-4, 6-7; no. 104 (June 1992): 5-6; Donald G. Davis, Jr. to editors of *American Libraries* and *Library Journal*, not published, from the author's personal files; Zoia Horn, "Why Doesn't ALA Act on Israeli Censorship?," On My Mind column in *American Libraries* (January 1992): 22.

- 19 "Israel and Occupied Territories Travel Seminar Planned," press release from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, The University of Texas at Austin, April 25, 1992; "Intellectual and Academic Freedom in Israel & the Occupied Territories", October 17-24, 1992, pamphlet. Both from the author's personal files.
- 20 "Israel Program Marked by Disruption," *Cognotes* (June 30, 1992): 2.
- 21 "Israelis Try to Censor S.F. Library Panel," *SF Weekly* (July 1, 1992).
- 22 1991-92 CD# 60. This author wishes to acknowledge David William's commendation in his July 28, 1992 Task Force report for my "masterful job" of presenting the resolutions at the ALA Membership Meeting, from the author's personal files.
- 23 *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 105 (September 1992): 2-4, 7-8; no. 107 (March 1993): 6-7.
- 24 1992/93 CD# 25.1.
- 25 Zoia Horn, "Protests Israel's Special Treatment," Letter to the Editor, *American Libraries* (June 1993): 475.
- 26 "The Social Responsibilities Round Table Urges ALA Council not to Rescind or Alter the 1992 Resolutions on Israeli Censorship: Statement Adopted by SRRT Action Council, January 25, 1992 [sic 1993]." However, this statement was actually only adopted by the IHRTF, not the Action Council.
- 27 "International Relations Committee Report to ALA Council, Tuesday, January 26, 1993," CD#25.2.
- 28 Adam L. Chandler, "American Library Association Buries Israel Censorship Issue," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (Sept./Oct. 1994): 87-88.
- 29 Robert Friedman, "The Jewish Thought Police: How the Anti-Defamation League Censors Books and Librarians, and Spies on Citizens," *The Village Voice* (May 11, 1993).
- 30 The IRC's "Report on CD 25 (1993): Amended Resolution on Israeli Censorship," contained a "Fact Sheet" chronology on the "Israeli Censorship Controversy," compiled by Robert P. Doyle, Director, Library Fellows Program, 1992-93 EBD#10.31; CD#25.6. In addition, Peggy Sullivan, ALA Executive Director, issued a memorandum to ALA Councilors on June 26, 1993, 1992-93 CD#63. It contained a factual letter issued by ALA President Marilyn Miller, a highly critical letter to Miller signed by 11 "professional librarians, faculty, and other interested parties," and a long highly critical letter by Ellen S. Zyroff (an extremely right-wing ALA Councilor) to Hardy Franklin, ALA President-Elect. Doyle also published "The Israel Debate: Lesson or Liabilities," *International Leads*, vol. 7, no. 4 (Winter 1993): 1-3.
- 31 *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 109 (September 1993): 1, 7-9. For more discussion about the backlash against SRRT, see *Sipapu*, 23, no. 1 (1993): 3; 23; no. 2 (1993): 3-7, 10; and "Council, Executive Board, Membership Meeting Highlights – New Orleans, 1993," *American Libraries* (July/August 1993): 618, 620. There was also a move in the ALA Executive Board to create another special task on the use of ALA's name but it was opposed by newly elected Vice President/President-Elect Arthur Curley, and defeated.
- 32 Williams' 1991 report to Action Council provoked much internal criticism. An example of this divisiveness includes a memo from Joseph Reilly to Sanford Berman,

- Al Kagan, and Elaine Harger, July 23, 1991, where the author started by saying that he was strongly against doing dirty laundry in public. Another good example of William's inflammatory style was his memo to Cynthia Johanson, SRRT Treasurer, July 12, 1991. From the author's personal files.
- 33 "Summary Report of the Work of the International Human Rights Task Force at the Atlanta ALA Convention and Perspectives for 1992," author's personal files. In that report, Williams also discussed the newsletter of the Committee on Israeli Censorship, an organization that appeared to be entirely of his own invention.
- 34 Perhaps the most damning exchange was between David Williams and Sandy Berman. In William's letter of October 28, 1992, he wrote, "I feel you have behaved in a highly unprincipled and reprehensible manner on this issue and toward me personally." In Berman's reply to 3 letters of February 1993, he stated that the first two were "highly insulting" and the third "highly flattering," and that "it is nearly inconceivable that the same person could have written all 3." He had not intended to reply but thought he now must do so. Berman wrote that Williams was untrustworthy and manipulative, and that he turned real and potential allies against him through his "inflammatory sectarian rhetoric and ad hominem attacks." He said that Williams lacked elemental tact and civility. This author fully agrees with Berman's remarks. Williams replied on June 4th in a long and very convoluted letter admitting some of Berman's points, including at times lacking tact and civility, making ad hominem attacks, and using sarcastic and hurtful rhetoric. From the author's personal files.
- 35 David Williams to Al Kagan, November 9, 1992, from the author's personal files.
- 36 Stillwell refused to acknowledge or debate the "insinuation" and "accusations." He concluded with the understatement, "I am sure that I continue to speak for them [Action Council members] when I say that your attitude, behavior, and conduct do not make things easy." Stephen J. Stillwell to David L. Williams, "Re: Your Letters of 3/26 and 4/24." The letter was copied to all the members of the Action Council, from the author's personal files. Immediately after the 1993 Annual Meeting, Williams wrote to this author stating that he was making a "political attack," not a "personal attack." He asked, "What ALA committee appointment will you be rewarded with, Al, for having accomplished this little piece of dirtywork? With your skills at twisting the truth and turning the victim into villain, you missed a great career in another epoch, say, that of one of Stalin's prosecutors during the Moscow frame-up trails, or some similar enterprise... Kaganovich?!"
- 37 Adam Leigh Chandler, "The 1992 American Library Association Resolution on Israeli Censorship and Other Human Rights Violations: A Select Bibliography, Placed in the Context of the Existing Literature on the Relationship between Zionism and U.S. Policy Towards Israel." MLIS Thesis, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1994, p. 10.
- 38 Sanford Berman to SRRT Action Council, "Open Letter to SRRT Action Council," December 30, 1993; Stephen J. Stillwell, Jr. to At-large Members of Action Council, "Re: SRRT Budget/Task Force on Israeli Censorship and Palestinian Libraries, February 15, 1994; Stephen J. Stillwell, Jr. to All Those Concerned with the Task

Force on Israeli Censorship...”, April 7, 1994. All from the author’s personal files.

- 39 Williams phoned Mark Rosenzweig at 3 am on May 25, 1994, and called him a “Fucking Judenrat traitor.” Rosenzweig wrote that Williams did not pronounce the word “Judenrat” as in German as “yoodn-raht,” but as “jew-den-rat,” “...giving ‘fucking jew-den-rat traitor’ the sound of an anti-Semitic epithet, whatever else its disgusting implications might be.” The Judenrat were the Nazi-created Jewish administrative councils. His second and third calls were taken by Rosenzweig’s answering machine. Williams went further. He organized a program for the 1994 Annual Conference in New Orleans where Jeffery Blankfort discussed Zionist-Nazi collusion and the role of the Judenrat, which he connected to a discussion of the ADL in stifling the debate about Israel and the history of Zionism. Mark Rosenzweig to Al Kagan, May 25, 1994, and May 26, 1994. Rosenzweig’s email message documenting the phone calls was sent out with a censure resolution and Sandy Berman’s *Open Letter to the Action Council* before the 1994 Annual Conference. Emails from the author’s personal files; Adam Chandler, “Social Responsibilities Tackles Difficult Issues,” *Cognotes* (June 26, 1994): 9.
- 40 Stephen Stillwell wrote that “...members of the Action Council were repulsed by the necessity of this step, it was finally taken nearly unanimously.” *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 113 (September 1994): 1, 3-4; no. 117 (September 1995): 1.
- 41 Some members of the Task Force on Israeli Censorship and Palestinian Libraries lobbied to continue, but eventually the Action Council disbanded the Task Force and reestablished this work as a project group under the International Responsibilities Task Force. This brought these activities to an end. *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 110 (December 1993): 5; no. 112 (June 1994): 4-5; no. 113 (September 1994): 3; no. 114 (December 1994): 1.
- 42 The case of David Williams finally came to an end at the 1995 Annual Conference. Williams had appealed his censure to Norman Horrocks, ALA’s parliamentary expert. Horrocks advised that the censure would only become valid after being voted at a SRRT Membership Meeting. This action was taken. Stephen J. Stillwell, Jr. to David Williams, March 31, 1995; David L. Williams to Stephen Stillwell and Norman Horrocks, June 15, 1995; *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 117 (September 1995): 1. Williams continued his political work at the Chicago Public Library, hosting a series of speakers and leafleting an appearance of Elie Wiesel during the Library’s celebration of Wiesel’s book, *Night*, during the 2001 “One Book, One Chicago” program. He was transferred to the Bessie Coleman Branch in 2002 along with about two dozen other librarians during a “re-balancing” of the workforce. It appears that he was suspended in February 2003, and resigned in August 2004. He continues to be active in Palestine solidarity activities in Madison, Wisconsin. See “Chicago Mideast Librarian Suffers Retaliation for Doing His Job,” *Electronic Intifada*, November 15, 2002, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/chicago-mideast-librarian-suffers-retaliation-doing-his-job/4206>; *Third Coast Press* (August 2004), vol. 8, 7, [http://www.thirdcoastpress.com/images/tcp\\_8aug04.pdf](http://www.thirdcoastpress.com/images/tcp_8aug04.pdf), accessed November 28, 2014.
- 43 Williams wrote 5 documents justifying his actions (the first 4 were not dated).

- “Background to the Break Between Mark Rosenzweig and Myself,” “Point-by-Point Response to the Attack on Me and the ICPLTF,” “Wither the PLG?—Notes from a ‘Dangerous Man,’” “The Origins & Meaning of the Kagan/Berman/Rosenzweig Vendetta,” and “SRRT Action Council Save the ALA from David Williams,” July 1994. All from the author’s personal files.
- 44 Sanford Berman, “Israeli Censorship, Palestinian Rights, and Antisemitism,” *Alternative Library Literature* 1990/1991 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992), 82; *Sipapu* 26, no. 2 (1996): 9.
- 45 *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 109 (September 1993): 1-2, 7-9; Robert I. Friedman, “The Jewish Thought Police: How the Anti-Defamation League Censors Books, Intimidates Librarians, and Spies on Citizens,” *The Village Voice* (July 27, 1993): 33-39. ALA received 156 letters on the issue (although 9 were duplicates). The Executive Board promised SRRT Coordinator Stephen Stillwell the chance to see the letters, but only 68 were made available. Only eleven of these were clearly ALA members. 21 charged anti-Semitism. The full analysis is in *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 111 (March 1994): 6. Note that Egypt was the second largest recipient of U.S. aid at the time.
- 46 *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 114 (December 1994): 5.
- 47 “Field Trip to Palestinian Libraries Yields Audience with Arafat,” *American Libraries* (January 1998): 40-42; “Global Quick Takes,” *American Libraries* (June/July 1999), 46; Elaine Harger to Al Kagan and Margo Brault, September 22, 1998, email from this author’s personal files; 1997-98 CD#18.3, “Resolution on the Libraries of the Gaza Strip/West Bank,” *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 132 (June 1999): 3.
- 48 David Robinson, Books Editor, “This is Just Cultural Vandalism,” *The Scotsman*, April 22, 2002, 10.
- 49 Joel Greenberg, “West Bank Damages Put at \$361 Million,” *New York Times* (May 16, 2002): A12. Other useful news accounts are: Serge Schmemann, “Mideast Turmoil: Ramallah: Palestinians Say Israeli Aim Was to Destroy Framework, from Archives to Hard Drives,” *New York Times* (April 16, 2002): A18; Michael Jansen, “Military is Deliberately Destroying State Structures Built by Palestinians: the First Targeted Site by the Israelis was Yasser Arafat’s Compound,” *The Irish Times* (April 16, 2002): 9; Dan Ephron, “Envoys Survey West Bank Ruins: Damage to Jenin Refugee Camp During Israeli Invasion Assessed,” *The Houston Chronicle* (April 23, 2002): A17; Mark Magnier, “The Middle East; Rebuilding on W. Bank Rubble to be Costly, Report Says; Palestinians: An International Group Assesses the Direct Damage at \$361 Million,” *Los Angeles Times* (May 16, 2002): A10.
- 50 Tom Twiss, “Damage to Palestinian Libraries and Archives during the Spring of 2002,” August 2, 2002, unpublished, from the author’s personal files.
- 51 Tom Twiss, “SRRT Responses on the Palestinian Libraries Issue,” “Questions and Answers on the Palestinian Libraries Issue,” “Statement in Support of the Resolutions on the Destruction of Palestinian Libraries, Archives, and Other Cultural Resources,” “Documents for the ALA Council Discussion on the Destruction of Palestinian Libraries, Archives, and Other Cultural Institutions,” and “Book Aid International’s

- Work in Palestine,” unpublished, from the author’s personal files.
- 52 MMD#5, moved by Tom Twiss and seconded by Peter McDonald.
- 53 2001-2002 CD#18.8; *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 140 (September 2002): 6. For more, see <http://www.libr.org/irtf/palestine/palestinianlibs.html>. That very weak resolution was distributed to the intended recipients as noted in “Report on the Implementation of the 2003 Midwinter Meeting Council Actions,” 2002-2003 ALA CD#9.1.
- 54 There is a letter of support (“I was even thrilled...”) from Brother Neil Kieffe, FSC, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Bethlehem University, to Tom Twiss, no date, from the author’s personal files. Pearl Berger voiced criticism in a letter to *American Libraries* (September 2002, p. 42). Letters sent in response by Tom Twiss and Ghada Elturk were not printed. N. Leonard Tolkan (a pseudonym) posted “Librarians Against Israel,” presumably to an ALA website on December 24, 2002, and posted “More About Librarians Against Israel,” in *Jewishpress.com* on January 15, 2003. Fayle Levy published “All Unquiet on the Library Front” in *Jewish Exponent*, vol. 213, no. 19 (February 13, 2003). Also Max Heuer, “Library Group Throws the Book at Destruction of Palestinian Libraries,” *JTA, Global News Service of the Jewish People*, June 30, 2002. And statement by the Executive Committee of the Israel Association of Libraries and Information Centers (ASMI) posted by Soshana Langerman, Chairperson of ASMI, “A Response to the ALA Resolution Concerning the Destruction of Palestinian Libraries, Archives and Other Cultural Institutions,” originally on their website but no longer available, from the author’s personal files.
- 55 International Committee of the Blue Shield, “Cultural Heritage in Gaza Damaged and in Great Danger”, February 18, 2009, forwarded email by Sjoerd Koopman on IFLA-L, February 26, 2009; Atul Aneja, “Food, Medicine Destroyed as Israeli Force Attack Gaza U.N. Compound,” *The Hindu*, January 16, 2009.
- 56 “The Gaza War... on North American Campuses,” *Inside Higher Education*, January 12, 2009; Rania Masri and Marcy Newman, “Why American Academics Must Join Boycott of Israel,” *The Electronic Intifada*, January 18, 2009, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/why-american-academics-must-join-boycott-israel/7997>; Canadian Association of University Teachers, and “Statement on the Gaza Conflict,” January 6, 2009, <http://archive.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=764>
- 57 “Understanding Gaza—One Conference, One Book—ALA Reads,” 2008-2009 CD#37.
- 58 “Resolution on the Connection Between the Recent Gaza Conflict and Libraries,” 2008-2009 CD#18.1; and *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 166 (March 2009): 16, 24-27.
- 59 *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 168 (September 2009): online in Minutes of SRRT Action Council Meeting I.
- 60 “Gaza Flotilla Raid,” *Wikipedia*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza\\_flotilla\\_raid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaza_flotilla_raid), accessed November 30, 2014.
- 61 This section is derived from the author’s personal experience at the 2015 Chicago Midwinter Meeting and the San Francisco Annual Conference. See also “Librarians Turn Page on Israel Motion,” *Chicago Jewish Star*, 6-19 February 2015, 1, 4.
- 62 2014-2015 ALA CD#34.

- 63 Represented in Exhibit 9 in the Endowment Report, 2014-15 CD#16.0.
- 64 2014-2015 ET #6.5 and 2014-2015 EBD #13.3.
- 65 2014-2015 ALA CD#32 rev.
- 66 2014-2015 ALA CD# 40 rev. Although the IRC received the full resolution, for some unknown reason several clauses were left off the document that went to the ALA Council. The following were unfortunately omitted: Whereas according to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, 3 Gaza universities were hit directly and 8 others received collateral damage; Whereas some Palestinian armed groups conducted military operations in the vicinity of UNRWA schools; Whereas the Israeli Defense Forces used the Beit Hanoun elementary school in Gaza for military purposes; Whereas a rocket likely fired from Gaza severely injured one person at the Eshol kindergarten in Israel. And the final words were left off the clause on kindergartens which noted that 11 were destroyed.
- 67 United Nations. Human Rights Council. *Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent Commission of Inquiry Established Pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution S-21/1. A/HRC/29/CRP.4*. See paragraphs 81-83, 421-448, 475-476, 585. Download from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIGazaConflict/Pages/ReportCoIGaza.aspx>. See also the Israeli government's response, *The 2014 Gaza Conflict: Factual and Legal Aspects*, [n.p.]: Israel [Ministry of Foreign Affairs], 2015, <http://mfa.gov.il/ProtectiveEdge/Documents/2014GazaConflictFullReport.pdf>, and *This Is How We Fought in Gaza: Soldiers' Testimonies and Photographs from Operation "Protective Edge"* (2014), [n.p.]: Breaking the Silence, 2015, <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/pdf/ProtectiveEdge.pdf>
- 68 Much from this section comes from the author's personal notes.
- 69 *List of Participants*, 66th IFLA General Conference, Jerusalem, 13-18 August 2000; *Addition to List of Participants*, 17 August 2000, 66th IFLA General Conference, Jerusalem, 13-18 August 2000.
- 70 IFLA Executive Board, Statement on the "66th IFLA General Conference, 2000," issued in Bangkok, August 1999, unpublished, from the author's personal files.
- 71 His short biography was published in *IFLA Express*.
- 72 The key documents were printed in *IFLA Express*, vol. 8 (August 18, 2000). See Frode Bakken and Bob McKee, "Palestinian Boycott," p. 3; "Statement from the National Conference of Palestinian Libraries," p. 3-4; Ross Shimmon, "Response by the IFLA Secretary General," p. 4-5; and "Statement from IFLA's Executive Board, 66th IFLA General Conference, 2000," p. 5-6. The Arab Federation for Libraries and Information (AFLI) made their boycott decision at the annual conference in Damascus in 1998. See "Boycott Threat to IFLA 2000," *The Library Association Record*, 102, no. 3 (March 2000): 126. There is also an unpublished statement, "The Palestinian National Committee for Boycotting IFLA 66th Conference in the Occupied Jerusalem," from the author's personal files.
- 73 IFLA Executive Board, Statement on the "66th IFLA General Conference, 2000," issued in Bangkok, August 1999, unpublished, from the author's personal files.
- 74 Stuart Hamilton and Frode Bakken, *Preliminary Report and Recommendations from*



*an IFLA/FAIFE-Mission to Israel and the Occupied Territories 13th–21st April 2007* (The Hague?: IFLA, 2007), <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/faife/publications/FAIFE-Mission-report-Aug2007.pdf>

- 75 Mark Rosenzweig, “ALA Membership Meetings: The Quorum Question,” *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 128 (June 1998): 4-5. In 1999, SRRT urged ALA to set the quorum back to 100, and to resubmit a referendum question to the membership. See *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 133 (December 1999): 3.
- 76 Al Kagan, “ALA Council Report to SRRT, July 2005,” *SRRT Newsletter*, no. 152/153 (December 2005): 5-6.
- 77 American Library Association, Committee on Organization, *Report to Council*, 1994 Annual Conference, Miami Beach (1993-94 CD#22.1, unpublished). This specific language was never codified into the *ALA Policy Manual*.