

# Letters

## Holocaust wrangle

ON a recent visit to Austria I happened to pass through Mauthausen, near Linz (Upper Austria).

I spent about two hours inspecting the concentration camp which was established there in 1939 as an overflow camp for Dachau. The camp processed thousands of prisoners till its closure in 1945. It had a gas chamber.

Since Austria was then a part of Germany and since nobody would claim that Mauthausen was in Poland, one might wonder how careful and thorough Lewis Brandon and his Institute for Historical Review are in checking their evidence.

André Mali

Western Australian Institute of Technology

BEFORE entering the 'debate' concerning the Holocaust (*Incite*, no 1, 25 January 1980), I did read Gitta Sereny's article in the *New Statesman* (2 November 1979) which had been quoted, or rather misquoted, by Lewis Brandon.

Not unexpectedly, I found that, by citing passages out of context, preceded by the loaded word 'admitted', Lewis Brandon twisted the thrust of Sereny's statements (not admissions) which demolish the neo-nazi apologists who (and I quote) 'regardless of mountains of evidence, regardless of the living witnesses . . . harp on their obsessional claim that there was no holocaust, no gas chambers, not to speak of.'

Librarians should read the *New Statesman* article, if only to get a better understanding of that 'universe of oppression and death' that was the network of concentration camps (Konzentrationslager) and the extermination camps (Vernichtungslager) throughout the Third Reich and their varying degrees of methodical crazy slaughter. They would learn that far from 'admitting' errors or falsehoods, Gitta Sereny sets out to counter the neo-nazi pseudo-historians' ridiculous 'claims' by offering a clear distinction of facts and fiction. As a librarian, I cannot but entirely agree with her closing statement - which, understandably, was *not* quoted by Brandon: 'Always, the proper reply to these dishonourable men' (meaning the neo-nazi apologists) 'begins with knowledge'.

I am not, to use one of Brandon's charming expressions, of the 'exterminationist lobby' (why is it that opponents to their propaganda always have to justify themselves? . . .)

But I must say that I am outraged at the line of 'argument' which seems to centre on the dispute of whether or not camps in Germany or only those in Poland used gas chambers for killing Jews.

Concentration camps in Germany and in its occupied territories caused the death of millions of people (not only Jews by any means!) by torture and brutality and 'simply' by hunger, sickness and unimaginably inhuman conditions. Methodical executions and mass killings are proven facts.

If 'Historical Review' consists of a clever mixing of lies and truth and of denial of unpalatable facts, then the results of such 'reviews', be they propaganda pamphlets or clothed in the language of academe, are

travesties of truth and knowledge.

Librarians ought not to be side-tracked by diversionary arguments put forward by the propagators of such material. Those publications have no place in a library.

Eva Langley, Parramatta, NSW

## Joint-use benefits

WHILST I congratulate Lesley Tannahill and the Friends of the Kalamunda Library (see *Incite* no 1) for gaining a branch library at Forrestfield, I was saddened to see that 'management problems' were suggested as one of the reasons a joint-use library would be unacceptable.

The other reasons against a joint-use library, in this instance, appear perfectly valid but I am disappointed that so many librarians continually throw up the bogey of 'management problems' against joint-use proposals.

The entrenched territorial claims of public

librarians work against joint-use libraries much more than rational analysis of any anticipated problems of management.

Many municipalities, education departments and school councils throughout Australia are enthusiastic about joint-use libraries, and rightly so. Closer co-operation between school and community has many advantages in developing education to meet local needs and the joint-use library is an ideal centre to promote the sharing of ideas - not just saving money. (What's wrong with library service on the cheap, anyway?)

Let's put aside these petty jealousies and start looking at the positive benefits offered by school and public library staff in a joint-use situation. The specialist skills each one can offer the other must lead to better services to users. With a little goodwill from both sides, joint-use libraries can be made to work and work much better than the apartheid-type development we have at present.

Euan M. Miller

Moonee Valley Regional Library Service

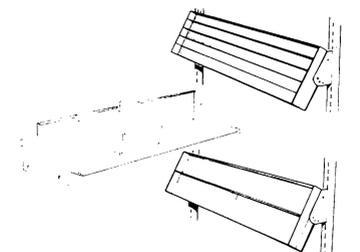
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