

Sanctions or censorship?

This letter is written as a result of reading the opinions of Jeff Leeuwenburg (18 July). The mentioned opinions concerning the South African official policies and the government enforcing them regard themselves to one side of the argument, the side that we never stop arguing about.

It is about time that we, the world, stopped writing a moral rulebook in which the countries that agree think that they have the right to make unaligned countries follow their laws.

Economic and other sanctions are a form of dictatorship which will not do any good in most situations, and it is indeed something at the Western 'democracy' vehemently opposes in its basic structural policies.

For viewers of the Carleton-Walsh report there was an insight into the question of sanctions. The primary namesake of the show read through a list of all sanctions performed by the British since the first World War. In these he could only find one that had had the desired effect, proving that they are useless.

I was under the impression that I was entering into a profession that could abstain from involving itself in such deplorable actions, but I can see that the seeds are there waiting to be sown.

I suggest that librarians continue in their present vein, as a profession with very few cases, and not dictated to by the politics of the day. One of the most important values of the library is to protect against bias. To stop trade with South Africa simply because of its policies would facilitate a form of this bias.

It is not our business to decide if nations, organisations, or even individuals are right or wrong in what they do, but it is our business to remain *Impartial* and present *Both Sides* of the argument, no matter what our personal views are.

Remember, libraries as I understand them, should be free from all influences. We stock books about and by Buddhists, Hare Krishnas, and countless other religions and sects. Simply not believing in a subject or its doings is not reason enough to impose censorship on it.

The South African Government has done nothing to libraries specifically and as such there are no grounds for stopping loans trade with them.

T.C. Lawton
(WAIT library student)

Official Action?

Jeff Leeuwenburg's letter in *InCite* for 18 July raises a number of professional issues which require further thought and comment.

I am in entire sympathy with the basic contention that librarians should consider withdrawing their services from South Africa when such services are likely to assist a repugnant and repressive regime.

The first two courses of action suggested, however, seem unacceptable to me. In my opinion quietly mislaying a request is more likely to cause the requestor to regard the library to which it is made as inefficient than to use it to realise that the request is being denied on political or moral grounds.

Similarly, *personal* representations by interlibrary loan officers are likely to carry little moral weight.

What is needed is *official* information, from the library to which the request is made, that the request for material will not be granted. It is only by *official* action that we can hope to institute change. The *personal* responsibility which we all have is to work, as Leeuwenburg suggests, for institutional policies.

Juliet Flesch

Position wanted

I am desirous of emigrating to Australia and therefore wish to seek employment in any academic, public or special library. I have more than 20 years of library experience and considerable expertise on the URICA computerised library system. My present position is that of a Data Base Management in a university library.

My library qualifications are MLS from the University of Pittsburgh, MS in ED from Indiana University, Bloomington, and MA from the University of Durban-Westville.

Manikam Moodley
140 Battersea Avenue
Reservoir Hills
Durban 4091
South Africa

No laughing matter

I wish to protest about your comments on the advertisement, appearing in *The Sun-Herald*, 29 June, 1986, 'casting librarians in a quiet and timid role . . .'. I find your remarks on this very distasteful advertisement to be almost as offensive as the ad itself.

Not only does the advertisement use a librarian stereotype, it also uses a sexist and exploitative view of an 'attractive' woman to promote a product which bears no relation to either of these misconceived images.

Your flippant reply only serves to reinforce the use of these two incorrect and offensive stereotypes, damning to both the library profession and women in general.

Surely this is not a responsible reply from a 'professional' association?

Pamela M Jenkins



AN EVENING WITH JAMES THOMPSON

Monday, 8 September 1986

James Thompson, Librarian of the University of Reading, is the author of *Library Power* and *The End of Libraries*. Hear his views on the future of libraries in the age of high technology, and a rapidly sinking Australian dollar.

Venue: Board Room, YWCA, Wentworth Avenue Darlinghurst
6 for 6.30 pm.

Cost: \$15, \$10 for LAA members. Refreshments will be served.

Contact: Sue Phillips, LAA
Tel. (02) 692 9233
(008) 221 1481

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THE LAA VIDEO

Students of the School of Library and Information Management at the SA Institute of Technology recently were shown the LAA video and their reactions have been supplied.

Asked if they considered that they gained an overall picture of the LAA, 16 thought 'yes' and 6 'no'. Sixteen students thought the video was about the right length, 2 thought it was too short and 4 found it too long. Twelve students found no area in which they required further information but 10 thought otherwise. Five of the viewers were unimpressed by the range of LAA activities but 14 were impressed. Only 5 would have preferred a personal talk, while 15 favoured the video. Twelve expressed the view that the video had encouraged them to join the LAA, but 10 did not feel the urge.

Enlarging on the question about wanting more specific information about the LAA, some felt that there was insufficient explanation of what benefit LAA membership could give to student members.

Another comment was that although the video kept reinforcing that LAA membership was a must, it didn't give clear enough reasons why. A number of people found that the video still left them unclear about how the LAA benefits the individual and about what the LAA actually does. More information about the sections and special interest groups was also asked for.

It was also suggested that a combination of the video and a personal talk would have been useful, in particular to cover the points raised by the students.

Other comments included that the video should explain how the LAA helps people to get jobs, should have more emphasis on activities for students, a feeling of uneasiness at belonging to an association with a basically 'professional' membership.

Enquiries about the LAA video should be addressed to Angela Brommann at Head Office (02) 692 9233 Toll free (008) 22 1481.

BiblioFile at UQLibrary

The University of Queensland Library is using BiblioFile to assist in its retrospective conversion project. BiblioFile marketed in Australia by ALDIS (Australian Laser Disk Information Services Pty. Ltd.), provides access to over three million Library of Congress MARC records on four compact laser discs.

BiblioFile is mounted on a CD-ROM disc drive with software on an IBM PC clone. Selected records are saved to a floppy disc file, and then converted to a standard AUSMARC format by software provided by ALDIS. The AUSMARC file is then down-line loaded from the PC to the Library's DEC PDP 11 based system for proof-listing, editing and indexing.

The benefits of using BiblioFile are seen as the ability to schedule retrospective cataloguing depending on the availability of staff, its ease of use, the high success rate and relatively inexpensive price per record.

BiblioFile, with its monthly English language updates, will also be used to select AUSMARC records for new titles.

The library estimates it could select, convert to AUSMARC and up-load over 700 records per day. Staff acceptance of BiblioFile has been high with the knowledge that they are at the leading edge of information technology in using the compact laser discs.

Sue McKnight
Deputy Technical Services Librarian
U of Q Library