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McCarthyism and Libraries:
Intellectual Freedom Under Fire, 1947-1954

by

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Introduction

This essay will analyze how library organizations, such as the American Library Association, and individual librarians responded to the pressure placed on libraries during the McCarthy era to deal with alleged subversion. Although libraries have always been the target of censors, it was during the first decade of the Cold War that those Americans most fearful of Communist subversion swept up large numbers of their fellow citizens in a crusade to rid libraries of Communist influence. That effort by the self-proclaimed “loyal Americans” to save libraries put more than just library collections under the microscope. The librarians themselves were scrutinized to ensure that they harbored no troubling past or present connections to radical political groups. Pressure groups examined library services closely as well, keeping an eye out for subversion in library exhibits or making sure that controversial books were only available by request, not on open shelving.

Events from 1947—the year of the first major library censorship battles in the postwar era—through 1954, when the tide of anticommunist hysteria receded somewhat from the steps of libraries and other institutions (a development that may have had something to do with the censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy in December 1954) will be covered in this study. The first section will discuss the range of sources available and what was used. Following that will be a brief background section detailing what libraries and the profession of librarianship looked like in the mid-1940s, just as one hot war ended and a cold one began. This section will elaborate on the significance of the professional associations to which librarians belonged, including the American Library Association (which, since its founding in 1876, has served as the main organization

librarians joined).¹ Throughout, the essay will bring both institutional responses and individual accounts by librarians to bear on the narrative.

Next will come a section reviewing in a general way the pressures placed on libraries and librarians (a discussion of the responses of librarians to these pressures will come later). With respect to library materials—items that a library might own, such as books, periodicals, or movie and sound recordings—there were events where librarians were pressured to remove certain materials altogether, to limit access to them, to sequester them, to specially label them, or to stop buying any potentially controversial items. The librarians themselves were also the target of direct, individualized pressures: frequently, their political backgrounds were examined and proof of their loyalty to America was subject to a legal oath.

The geographic scope of where these pressures were placed will be reviewed next. The actual stories of how librarians responded to varying pressures had different levels of significance; some events were mostly local matters, while others played out at the state, national, or international levels.

The remainder of the essay will delve into how librarians and library associations responded to the pressures they faced. The first part of this section will examine situations where material in library collections was scrutinized by pressure groups who had taken upon themselves the task of fighting what they perceived to be subversive influences. The second part of this section will look at how librarians handled having their own political beliefs and loyalty to America questioned. Both sections will feature paradigmatic stories told chronologically. Where there are sources to back it up, there will be stories that indicate the extent to which librarians tried to resist the pressure—

sometimes they fought back with considerable effort, at other times they caved in—and why they responded the way they did.²

A brief conclusion to this essay will discuss some of the limits of this essay's scope. It will also suggest what questions warrant further study.

A Note about Sources

The responses of librarians and library associations—specifically, the American Library Association and state library associations—to political pressures fell across a wide spectrum, ranging from defiant resistance to ambivalent acquiescence to complete agreement. Where there was determined resistance, librarians often generated a paper trail—petitions, resolutions, letters to the editor of local newspapers, articles in library journals, reports, and the like—that aid the historian.

Finding evidence of librarians giving in to pressure is a much more challenging task than locating sources on librarian resistance. The actions of librarians who did remove books were usually done out of the public eye. Although the evidence analyzed for this essay does not offer clues about why librarians failed to leave documentary traces of their having given in to pressure, one can make some informed guesses about why this the case.

A librarian who agreed with the decision to pull a book off the shelves might have seen such actions as just part of the job and not worth making much note of. The main library journals of the era—*Wilson Library Bulletin*, *ALA Bulletin*, *Library Journal*—carried no first person accounts by librarians of how they complied with orders to remove challenged books. While there may be internal records in libraries that document the removal of a book, it was deemed beyond the scope of this essay to locate such evidence.

It also seems fair to assume that at least some librarians were fearful when their libraries came under fire. Librarians in public libraries and at libraries in the public schools were at the mercy of municipal governments; it was not unheard of for librarians to be fired for resisting the pressure to remove materials.³ Librarian David Berninghausen, who served on the American Library Association's Committee on Intellectual Freedom through the McCarthy era, wrote in 1975 that "the climate of repression of the period between 1950 and 1954 is almost unimaginable today."⁴

Given the amount of pressure brought to bear on librarians, it is not surprising that they often acted in secrecy, feeling that it was safer to keep a low profile. Those who were on a mission to root out subversion in American culture, too, often compelled secrecy from those they pressured. Much of the anticommunist activity of the McCarthy era was cloaked in great secrecy: accusations that were made anonymously, closed door hearings where testimony was privately given by subpoenaed witnesses, and undocumented background investigations.

Secrecy could be found in the library world, too. For example, the State Department refused in 1953 to divulge clearly how they instructed overseas libraries run by its International Information Agency to purge their collections of controversial works. Books were taken out of the libraries, some were even burned, but it is still not clear exactly how the librarians knew what to remove and how they were instructed to do it.⁵

Most of the evidence of librarians giving in to pressure used for this present study is based on second-hand accounts of local events: articles in newspapers, magazines, and library periodicals describing how a librarian was fired for refusing to take a loyalty oath or how a school library had taken copies of the *New Republic* off the shelves. Those

librarians that gave in to the pressures placed on them did not take the trouble to explain themselves in articles in library journals or speeches at library conferences. The details of their activities and their motivations are not documented; what was talked and written about is merely the end result of their actions.

Furthermore, it is safe to assume that only some of those actions were noticed. If a librarian agreed to remove copies of novels by Howard Fast after a local chapter of the American Legion had noisily demanded it, it is possible that someone would have written about the removal of the book in a local newspaper or library publication.⁶ But if that same librarian also decided to avoid purchasing a new book that offered a balanced portrait of life in the Soviet Union because it might be deemed controversial, it is not likely there would be any documentation to record this librarian's decision. Some parts of the story we may never know.

American Libraries in the 1940s and 1950s

According to the *American Library Annual for 1955-1956*, there were in 1954 20,000 school libraries in elementary and high schools, 7000 public libraries (a figure that does not include the 3100 branch libraries of city or county library systems), 3600 special libraries (libraries in corporations, law firms, hospitals, museums, the military), and 1400 college and university libraries. As is still the case today, librarians who worked in school libraries, public libraries, and college and university libraries and who wished to join a professional association tended to join the American Library Association (ALA). Members received monthly copies of the *ALA Bulletin*, the association's flagship publication; the articles in it were on topics relevant to the kinds of institutions the members worked at. Librarians who worked in special libraries generally gravitated

toward the Special Libraries Association, although those who worked in libraries at hospitals, medical schools, and medical research institutes were drawn to the Medical Library Association.⁷

The ALA, though, dominated the library world ever since its founding in 1876. Representing the interests of librarians who worked at the bulk of American libraries, the ALA had long established ties to government agencies, educational associations, and the publishing industry. It was responsible for accreditation of library schools. Librarians also looked to ALA publications, such as the *ALA Catalog*, for guidance in making decisions about what books and magazines should make up their library's core collection.

Although the ALA had an executive director to manage the day-to-day operations of the association, it also had a president and a governing body referred to as ALA Council that was elected each year by the members. The association held its annual meeting in June or July; ALA Council voted there on key issues. A smaller "midwinter" meeting was held, too, every January. Attendance at the annual meeting was quite large; in 1948, for example, 6000 librarians came to Atlantic City.⁸

One of the main responsibilities of librarians traditionally has been to select materials for purchase. The principles guiding selection usually were aligned with the mission of the library. A school library collected materials that were age-appropriate and supported the school's curriculum. The college or university library also purchased materials that were in line with the academic programs of the parent institution; academic libraries were obliged to be far more comprehensive in their scope and depth than a school library. The largest of the academic libraries shared an ethos with that of the true research library, such as the Newberry Library in Chicago or the central library of the

New York Public Library; there, librarians in charge of acquisitions were prone to say things like, “We must have everything!”⁹

Public libraries fell into three categories: large central libraries in a city or county system, branch libraries in a system, and the small public library. While the large central libraries shared some devotion to building wide and deep collections, branch libraries and small public libraries were limited in budget and space and thus had notable practical constraints on the kinds of materials they could acquire.¹⁰

Students at library school were taught the principles of book selection using a number of standard texts. E.W. McDiarmid, who had been the university librarian and the director of the library school at the University of Minnesota as well as the president of ALA in 1948-1949, restated succinctly those principles as a series of questions a librarian should consider before making any purchase:

1. Is the author honest and sincere in his presentation?
2. Is the book accurate and truthful in its facts?
3. Is the book a straightforward attempt to discuss a subject? Phrased negatively, does the book, while ostensibly attempting an honest presentation, actually border on dishonesty in its approach?
4. If a book purports to meet high standards of intellectual quality, does it actually do so?
5. If a book does not purport to examine its topic objectively, does it present the topic honestly?¹¹

As librarians found themselves under attack by pressure groups that objected to certain books in library collections, the librarians were often shocked that their authority as professionals trained in the art of book selection was being questioned. For example, a group of librarians at the First Conference on Intellectual Freedom, held in New York City in 1952, expressed disdain at the idea of having to defend their decisions and said things like:

You don't object to the doctor impressing his point of view upon you when he tells you that you are dangerously ill. You don't talk about his "point of view." Librarians should be expert or else they are not a profession.¹²

Pressures on Libraries and Librarians

In the late 1940s and through most of the 1950s, many public and private institutions and organizations were touched in some way by efforts to rid America of the influence of political radicals, particularly those who were members of (or "fellow travelers" with) the Communist Party. Government officials and agencies at all levels—federal, state, local—pursued those deemed subversive. Groups like the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Chamber of Commerce, which had been vocal in anticommunist efforts in previous decades, moved into the spotlight again and played a central role in the drama of unmasking allegedly subversive elements in American society.¹³

Like many other institutions in the United States, libraries found themselves as players in this drama. Library collections were challenged repeatedly for harboring books, films, and periodicals deemed by pressure groups (or sometimes by just a single but very vocal citizen) to be overly sympathetic if not outright propagandistic in their treatment of the Soviet Union. The same pressure groups and vocal individuals also often criticized libraries for not including books that they viewed as shining examples of American patriotism. For example, in 1953, a local citizen named Kathryn Mitchell contacted the directors of the public library in her hometown of Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania, to ask why the collection had so many books sympathetic to communism and so few by the likes of Senator Joseph McCarthy (author of *McCarthyism, the Fight for America: Documented Answers to Questions Asked by Friend and Foe*) and John

Flynn (author of *While You Slept: Our Tragedy in Asia and Who Made It*, the *Roosevelt Myth*, and the *Road Ahead: America's Creeping Revolution*).¹⁴

It is important to note that during the postwar period, censorship pressures on libraries were not solely limited to materials that were politically suspect. At the same time that libraries were under fire for keeping a copy of Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* on the shelves, they were also defending themselves against objections to books that offended moral and religious sensibilities. Paul Bixler, who was the secretary of the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom, wrote in 1952 that there were two main types of censorship which libraries had to confront: "political censorship" and "moral censorship." About the latter, Bixler said that it was "aimed at the obscene and the sacrilegious." Speaking of recent legislation, Bixler noted that the "urge to censorship on these grounds was a strong element in the two Gathings bills introduced in the Eighty-second Congress—one have to do with radio and television, and the other with books, magazines, and 'comics.'" He also argued that in "libraries, efforts at censoring so-called 'obscene' material may not so frequently take the form of outright censorship as of 'control' through demands for restrictions on availability or for labeling."¹⁵

Pressure was brought to bear not only on the materials in the library but the staff who ran it. Loyalty programs sprang up around the country beginning in 1947, the year that President Harry Truman enacted a federal program for employees in the executive branch. Typically, these programs required that employees sign an oath indicating whether or not they had had or continued to have any affiliations with organizations considered subversive. Those who did admit to affiliations, or were suspected of lying on their oath application, or who refused to sign the oath were investigated, which in turn

sometimes led to the employee being fired and blacklisted. As many librarians were public employees (at school libraries, public libraries, or libraries at public universities and colleges), they were required to submit to loyalty programs operating at the state or local level. One librarian who ran afoul of a loyalty program was Rebecca Wolstenholme, who had signed a loyalty oath in Oakland and was then questioned by the library board when they found out she had been named as a Communist in testimony given at the House Un-American Activities Committee. After refusing to answer the library board's questions, she was fired in 1954. Her legal battles to get her job back at the Oakland Public Library, which were eventually successful, dragged on for five years.¹⁶

Pressures on libraries could be found at many different levels: international, national, state, county, and municipal. At the international level, there were various pressures preventing the free flow of books from the Soviet Union into the United States. Logistical challenges as well as federal laws blocked many books and periodicals from entering the United States. An example of pressures at the national level can be seen in the proposal in Congress by Representative Harold Velde in 1952 for a bill "to provide that the Librarian of Congress shall mark all subversive matter in the Library of Congress and compile a list thereof for the guidance of other libraries in the United States." The bill never made it out of committee, but it is notable that such legislation was even being considered.¹⁷

The ALA itself reported that it was subject to pressure at the national level. In a 1952 article in *ALA Bulletin*, it was reported that the "Select Committee of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States" sent a document with sixty-three questions about the ALA that needed to be answered within ten days. According to the

letter that accompanied the questionnaire, Congress was conducting an investigation of “educational and philanthropic foundations and other comparable organizations” that were tax-exempt to see if they “were using their resources for un-American and subversive activities.” Questions included, “State your definition and your understanding of the meaning of the term ‘subversive’ as that term is commonly used in public print today,” and “What steps, if any, have been or are being taken to prevent infiltration of your organization by subversive persons?” Pressure at the national level also came from groups like the American Legion, whose monthly magazine published articles listing authors they deemed subversive.¹⁸

At the state level, pressure was often exerted in the form of laws for loyalty programs, such as the Ober Law in Maryland. States often passed laws restricting the content or authorship of textbooks found in schools and school libraries, as was the case in Texas and Alabama.

Pressures at the city and county level came in all forms. The most common was the demand by an individual or local pressure group to remove allegedly subversive books from the library. As will be seen later in this essay, such challenges to library materials took place across the country, with public libraries and school libraries under the most scrutiny. As described by Matthew Josephson in a 1952 article in the *Nation*, the local challenge:

may begin...by the publication of an anonymous letter in the local paper assailing the high-school superintendent or town librarian for harboring “subversive” books. The object is to ban not only works that seem to advocate social change but in many cases writings that are simply critical of our business morals....¹⁹

According to a 1952 *New York Times* article that reported the results of the paper's "nation-wide study of book censorship," the "censorship is usually conducted in the name of a patriotic organization or committee set up to protect the community against subversive literature." The paper found that "voluntary groups are being formed in every state to screen books for 'subversive' or un-American statements."²⁰

Librarians Respond to Pressure

Those who were intent on ferreting out subversion in libraries focused on three areas: the collections of material in the library (such as books, magazines, newspapers, and films), the staff of the library, and the services that the library offered (circulation of materials, reference services, and exhibits in the library). Of these three areas—materials, staff, services—library materials were the most regularly attacked. Typically, a local group (such as a chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or the Daughters of the American Revolution) or a determined individual would call for the removal of books or magazines in that community's public or school libraries. The first major battle of this type began in 1947 in California and involved textbooks in school libraries as well as in classrooms. California had already witnessed notable censorship battles just before the United States entered the war, mostly over the issue of whether John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, was suitable material for public library shelves.²¹

The California censorship battles that began in 1947 took place during a watershed year in America's efforts to battle communism. In March, President Harry Truman was promoting the Truman Doctrine as a way to confront the growth of communism worldwide. Truman had also issued Executive Order 9835, which required loyalty oaths for employees of the federal government. In July, George Kennan, a high

ranking figure in the State Department, published “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” an article in *Foreign Affairs* that helped lay the groundwork for America’s policy of containment toward Soviet expansion. The House Un-American Activities Committee brought Hollywood writers and directors to Washington in October to be grilled on their ties to subversive groups; ten of those who were blacklisted by the studios because they refused to cooperate at the hearings came to be known the Hollywood Ten because of their unified strategy of opposition.²²

In the spring of 1947, textbooks sponsored by the National Education Association and the Institute of Pacific Relations came under fire for their allegedly subversive content.²³ Groups such as the California Committee on Un-American Activities and the California Society of the Sons of the American Revolution focused their attacks on Marguerite Stewart’s *Land of the Soviets* and the *Building America* textbook series. The California Library Association’s Committee on Intellectual Freedom passed a resolution that declared the textbooks in question were suitable material for school libraries and that also stated their opposition to legislation that would have placed greater restrictions on allowable political content in textbooks. The state legislature did end up cutting funds for any future purchase of the books, but the bills that would have prevented such works of “propaganda” (as the books’ opponents labeled them) from being held in public school libraries died in session. Despite the librarians’ advocacy for retaining the books, they were unable to prevent some school districts from removing them.²⁴

The textbook battle was well covered in library publications and library conference. At the 1947 annual conference of the American Library Association, which marked attendance of three thousand librarians, librarian Marion Horton gave a speech

about the censorship controversy in California; according to library historian Louise Robbins, this was the first time that an ALA conference made mention of “Cold War censorship problems.”²⁵ By September 1947, articles about the battle began to appear in the leading trade periodical for librarians, *Library Journal*.²⁶ As will be seen again and again, librarians used library publications and conferences as main venues for alerting their colleagues about censorship attempts.

As criticism of the *Building America* series continued in 1948, librarians at the San Bernardino Public Library published a pamphlet, *The Right To Find Out: An Analysis of the Criticisms of Building America*, and distributed it widely. In this small publication, the librarians offered a point-by-point response to each of the accusations about the series made in a report by Richard E. Combs, the special counsel for the State Senate Investigating Committee on Education. The pamphlet notes that the *Building America* series, which produced about eight new titles a year, had been in use by the San Bernardino Schools since in 1935. The librarians indicated that Combs had focused his criticisms on two of the titles in the series: *Our Minority Groups: Spanish Speaking People* and *Russia*. By their analysis, the librarians found that Combs made use of four unfair methods of critique in his report: he “quotes many statements that are not there at all” in the series; he was guilty of “lifting a single sentence out of context”; he “employs exaggeration and false emphasis”; he “seems to have an aversion to unpleasant facts and pictures being used, even though they may be true.” In addition to helping to distribute this pamphlet, the Committee on Intellectual Freedom “secured publicity for its activities through radio programs, and through editorials and news releases in the *Publisher’s Weekly*, *School Review*, the *Library Journal*, *NEA Journal*, ALA and CLA publications,

and in local staff organs.” The committee also established relationships with other groups, such as the League of Women Voters.²⁷

By 1949, the uproar over the books had died down. The resistance of librarians had at best a mixed outcome. State funding for the purchase of the *Building America* series for school libraries was ended. Some schools did pull the titles from the series out of the libraries. Mildred Batchelder, a librarian at the American Library Association headquarters office and a respected authority on school and children’s librarianship, noted in 1947 that there are a “number of schools in the state of California which have not replaced *Building America*.”²⁸ Librarians in California did, though, help convince the Assembly not to pass two bills that would have placed further restrictions on what books could be purchased for California schools. Furthermore, the California librarians had mobilized their colleagues across the state in response to these attacks on library materials, helping to prepare them for battles just around the corner.

At the same time that many librarians in California were rising up in defense of books in their school libraries, librarians in New York City schools faced their own local challenges. In early 1947, the New York City Board of Education banned Howard Fast’s novel, *Tom Paine*, for its “vulgar passages.” Concern over Paine’s membership in the Communist Party was probably the subtext for accusations of obscenity in his work. He had already been questioned by HUAC in 1946 because of his party ties and in 1947 was convicted for contempt for refusing to cooperate with HUAC; for his defiance, Fast was sentenced to three months in prison in 1950.²⁹

An even more notable case arose in April 1948 when the Board of Education banned the leftist periodical the *Nation* from school libraries because the magazine had

recently published a series of articles by Paul Blanshard that were considered critical of “the official position of the Catholic Church in such matters as education, science, medicine, marriage and divorce, democracy and fascism.”³⁰ Although the Board of Education defended its censorship out of concern for the sensitivities of Catholics, there was, as in the case of the banning of *Tom Paine*, a likely political subtext. The *Nation* was a well-known political magazine whose leftist editorial stance had long been established. Other communities and institutions that later banned the magazine from their libraries did so clearly out of concern for its political views.³¹

During the fifteen years of the ban, individual librarians as well as the American Library Association spoke out against it in articles, speeches, resolutions, and petitions. The ALA, represented by the chair of the Committee on Intellectual Freedom, David Berninghausen, testified in hearings held by the Board of Education.³² The ALA and other library groups formed alliances with other groups who were concerned with New York’s actions, such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Education Association, and the National Council for Freedom of Expression (which was founded in 1949). The move to build alliances was one that librarians would repeat, as will be seen later, in many other cases of censorship.

Another notable feature in the case of the *Nation* in New York City relates to the question of who gets to decide what materials will be purchased for the library. David Berninghausen wrote in 1949 that New York had a system for ordering materials that took power away from librarians and gave it instead to the “nine New York City superintendents [who] require all library materials to be selected from their centrally approved list.” Berninghausen noted that this process “is not only contrary to the

recommendations of professional librarians, but it is radically different from the general practice in high school libraries.”³³

Since the late 19th century, the role of the librarian as an informed and highly professional selector of materials for purchase expanded as new demands were put on libraries and new tools were made available. A movement started around the early 1900s to open up libraries to a wider audience. Children’s rooms were opened and new services (such as story hours) were launched to bring greater numbers of children in. Reference desks were opened so that the public could receive assistance in navigating expanding collections and “because librarians recognized the importance of maintaining good relations with the public in order to justify tax support.”³⁴

The number of tools to aid the librarian in selecting appropriate materials grew. Library historian Wayne Wiegand notes that the American Library Association published many editions of the *ALA Catalog*, a “standard selections guide that was supplemented monthly by *Booklist* magazine.” He also argues that “a generation of librarians had been taught to think that titles cited there—all of which passed careful screening in American literary and scholarly establishment review—were worth acquiring.” By the 1950s, librarians “looked to the *Public Library Catalog*, the *Fiction Catalog*, and *Children’s Catalog*, all successors to parts of the old ALA Catalog,” for guidance in library acquisitions. Wiegand also points out that that some librarians were “reluctant to subscribe to any periodical not indexed” in the *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature*.³⁵ What is notable about all these tools is that they were created by librarians for librarians. These selection guides represent a claim by librarians for professional respect and autonomy.

When the superintendents at the Board of Education in New York City decided that school librarians would have to use selection guides that the board had created, it struck at the claim of professional autonomy that librarians had been advancing since the early 1900s. One of the defenses that David Berninghausen advances for keeping the *Nation* in New York City school libraries is that the “standard library guide, *Magazines for High School*,” suggests “the *Nation* as suitable for senior high school, noting the important fact that it is indexed in the *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature*.”³⁶

Another notable aspect of the *Nation* case is that it started just around the time that ALA was launching itself into a new, highly public role of defender of intellectual freedom. At the ALA annual conference in Atlantic City, six thousand attendees heard numerous speeches and presentations that, as historian Louise Robbins put it, “exhorted librarians to uphold democratic values of free inquiry and to combat censorship.” With its exhibit booth at the convention, the ALA’s Committee on Intellectual Freedom helped publicize the ban on the *Nation* in the New York City schools as well as other notable cases. The *New York Times*, normally not given to covering the annual meeting of librarians, published four articles between June 16 and June 20, 1948, that detailed librarians’ increased interest in fighting the rising tide of censorship and were the first time the paper reported on the case of the *Nation* ban in New York City.³⁷

There were many speeches (some of which were published in the *ALA Bulletin* a few months later) that were devoted to the issue of censorship. Attendees of the conference could hear lawyer Arthur Farmer’s speech on June 15, “Pressure-Group Censorship—and How to Fight It,” or lawyer Robert D. Leigh’s speech that same day, “Intellectual Freedom,” which urged librarians to move toward the “development of

group policy, solidarity, and action in this matter of resisting improper pressures.” The day before, novelist Pearl S. Buck, delivered a speech, “World Understanding through the Reading,” that cautioned librarians to consider that “censorship is the first step toward book-burning, and book-burning throughout history has been the sign of the dictator.”³⁸

The conference inspired efforts to battle censorship and offered new tools and arguments for librarians to use. On July 13, only three weeks after the conference ended, the chair of the ALA’s Committee on Intellectual Freedom, David Berninghausen, represented the ALA at a hearing in the office of one of the superintendents of the New York City Board of Education. In his testimony, Berninghausen said that the ALA formally protested the ban on the *Nation* “as an act that is a threat to freedom of expression and contrary to the Library Bill of Rights and the United States Bill of Rights.”³⁹

The Library Bill of Rights that Berninghausen referred to was not the one adopted by the ALA in 1939 (which was actually called the Library’s Bill of Rights), but rather a revision of the 1939 statement that was approved at the 1948 ALA conference. In the nine years that passed from the adoption of the first Library Bill of Rights, there was little mention of it in library journals.

After the 1948 revision of the Library Bill of Rights, the document was transformed into a fundamental statement of principles, something that was endlessly cited in local censorship battles, praised in articles and speeches by librarians, and adopted by the boards of trustees by countless public libraries. Any explanation of why the 1948 revision of the document was so much more valuable to librarians than the 1939 version must take into account the perception by librarians in the late 1940s that they

were under attack in a way they had never been before. The 1944-1945 annual report of the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom noted that, as far as censorship cases went, "up to the present time very few incidents have been reported." The committee's report did go on to say that the "lack of information about such incidents may mean that they do not exist" but it may also "mean that librarians do not care to report interference" or that "librarians are so cautious in policies of book selection that they avoid 'incidents' before they have a chance to occur."⁴⁰

As David Berninghausen recalled in 1953, at the 1948 conference the Committee on Intellectual Freedom reported on the many recent cases of censorship: "Birmingham, Alabama, *Senior Scholastic* had been banned from all schools because of an issue devoted to the theme of human brotherhood;" the *Nation* had been banned from schools in Newark, New Jersey, because of the articles by Paul Blanshard about the Catholic Church (the same ones that troubled New York City's Board of Education); the *Building America* series was still being challenged in California; the *New Republic* had been pulled from the shelves of the public library in Peoria, Illinois; the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution had both made resolutions in the past year to clear subversive materials from libraries. In his 1952 letter to the editor of the *ALA Bulletin*, librarian Forrest Spaulding pointed out that 1939 "was in the pre-witch-hunt era when the need for such a document was much less obvious than in 1948."⁴¹

The 1948 Library Bill of Rights indicated that its "basic policies...should govern the services of all libraries." The document offered five broad statements that described freedom of access to a wide range of library materials. Libraries should not exclude any book "because of the race or nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer."

Libraries should offer the “fullest practicable provision of material presenting all points of view” that “should not proscribed or removed from the library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.” In opposition to “volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion or by organizations that would establish a coercive concept of Americanism,” libraries must fight censorship “in maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment.” Libraries “should enlist the cooperation of allied groups in the fields of science, of education, and of book publishing in resisting all abridgment of the free access to ideas and full freedom of expression.” Finally, meeting places and rooms in libraries “should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members.”⁴²

In the 1948 *Annual Report of the Committee on Intellectual Freedom*, Berninghausen said he expected that the Library Bill of Rights would “clearly place libraries in the position of being aggressive defenders of the right to freedom of research and inquiry.”⁴³ The revisions made in 1948 to the 1939 Library Bill of Rights indicated this new commitment. The new document was:

[A] stronger and more explicit statement of rights and responsibilities than the original. Book selection, according to the new statement, should not be done on the basis of race or nationality or the political or religious views of the author. The earlier statement had said that these factors should not influence the selection process. The new policy also stated that censorship attempts by individuals or groups must be challenged by librarians as part of their responsibility to provide free access to information.⁴⁴

The California Library Association’s Committee on Intellectual Freedom exemplified that drive to challenge the censors. After the 1948 ALA conference, the committee sent to all two thousand members of the California Library Association copies

of its provocatively titled bulletin, *Intellectual Freedom Is Every Librarian's Responsibility*.⁴⁵

The stirring speeches at the 1948 ALA conference in defense of intellectual freedom inspired librarians in other parts of the country, too. Sigrid Edge, a professor at the Simmons College School of Library Science, wrote in a letter to the editor of *Library Journal* that at the conference she “was deeply moved by the inspiring talks...challenging the library profession to resist censorship.” She also stated that the Library Bill of Rights “was one evidence of our resistance” and that the document “fearlessly stated our responsibility to provide freely material on all sides of controversial issues.” Another librarian, Sara Krentzman Srygley, called the Library Bill of Rights a “tower of strength.” Such effusive encomiums to the 1939 Library Bill of Rights are not found in library publications. Clearly, the 1948 document struck a chord. It is also notable that some local libraries and library boards began to adopt the Library Bill of Rights as policy.⁴⁶

In an article in *Library Journal*, David Berninghausen suggested that the Library Bill of Rights is an “official statement of policy which can be used as a protection against volunteer censors.” He argued that, when adopted in advance of any censorship threats, it is a “wise and effective safeguard.” At a 1953 conference on intellectual freedom, which had been scheduled to take place in Whittier, California, a few days before the annual conference of the ALA, there was much talk about the value of the Library Bill of Rights. Attendees broke out into discussion groups based on what kind of libraries they worked for (small public libraries, large public libraries, college and university libraries, and school libraries). The summaries of the conversations of the small and large public

libraries groups indicate general agreement among discussants that adopting the Library Bill of Rights would help minimize any future censorship problems.⁴⁷

As the pressures on libraries mounted, the Library Bill of Rights came to be viewed as more valuable than ever. By 1952, when the library journals were filled with articles detailing challenges to library materials across the country, the ALA Committee on Intellectual Freedom argued in its annual report that given the current climate of “when the basic principles of Americanism are under attack” as never before, it is fortunate that “American librarians have the Library Bill of Rights, written, discussed, and adopted as a statement of basic principles by this Association at a time when it was less difficult to distinguish between principle and expediency.” In a 1952 article in *ALA Bulletin*, two California librarians, John E. Smith and Evelyn Benagh Detchon, said that by drafting the Library Bill of Rights, librarians have “taken the side of those who do not fear the American heritage of liberty” and can therefore “pride themselves on their ability to see beyond the hysteria of the moment.”⁴⁸

During these years of increasing pressure, references to the Library Bill of Rights by librarians were sometimes made amidst specific battles. David Berninghausen advised readers of *Library Journal* that the document is “useful after attacks on libraries or librarians” and also noted that “some library trustees have found it helpful in meeting the attempts at censorship by pressure groups.”⁴⁹ Such a strategy, though, did not always prove effective. It has already been noted how the Library Bill of Rights was referred to in 1948 the *Nation* case in New York City only weeks after the document had been adopted.

Another case where wielding the Library Bill of Rights did nothing to save library materials from being pulled from shelves occurred at the Bartlesville Public Library in Oklahoma in 1950. As detailed by library historian Louise Robbins, the problems in Bartlesville began a week after Senator Joseph McCarthy's famous speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, in which he claimed there were a number of Communists in the State Department. At a meeting of the Bartlesville City Commission, representatives of a small group of citizens began to complain about subversive materials, such as the *Nation*, in the local public library. A later meeting of the commission offered critics of the library a chance to complain that the librarian, Ruth Brown, and the library board had refused to remove the materials they found dangerous. Although the library board did temporarily remove the challenged magazines, it offered a report to the city commissioners that "asserted the periodicals collection was appropriately balanced, and defended the *Nation* and the *New Republic*" while agreeing to permanently remove *Soviet Russia Today*, a monthly magazine published in the United States by the organization Friends of the Soviet Union. Some parts of the Library Bill of Rights were included in the library board's report. Not only did the board's report fail to save the challenged items from being banned, it also did not help Ruth Brown (a thirty-year veteran of the library) or the entire board itself from being dismissed. The replacement board added *Consumer Reports* and the *Negro Digest* to the list of banned items for good measure. In her account of the Bartlesville episode, Robbins also suggests that racial politics played a role in the story, as the librarian had recently been involved with local civil rights activities, something that raised eyebrows in a town with Jim Crow laws.⁵⁰

Robbins suggests that even though the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom was notified of the case early on, it was unable to do much. It convinced the Oklahoma Library Association to investigate and issue a report and it helped ALA Executive Board with a resolution protesting the firing of Ruth Brown, but it declined to assist Brown in her litigation (which was ultimately decided by the Oklahoma Supreme Court). The library in Bartlesville, meanwhile, continued to violate the principles of the Library Bill of Rights, as it enlisted the help of the American Legion to do background checks on prospective librarians.⁵¹

Librarians did not always lose their battles against the censors, though. In late September 1948, the five-member Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles voted to establish a board of censors that would examine all the books in the county libraries. The head of the public library system for the County of Los Angeles, John Henderson, had recently run afoul the Board of Supervisors, for protesting a policy requiring all county employees to sign a four-part loyalty oath. In defending the proposed board of censors, one of the county supervisors said that he was “not satisfied our librarian—Mr. Henderson—is free of those liberal thoughts that we don't like to see in the mind of the head of our library.”⁵²

Librarians in Los Angeles were quick to notify the Committee on Intellectual Freedom of the California Library Association (CLA) and the ALA's committee of the county's plan. Both the CLA and the ALA contacted the Board of Supervisors to register their protest. Newspapers began covering the story, including the *New York Herald Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Daily News*. The CLA and the ALA worked with the League of Women Voters in California, the Parent Teachers Association, and the

American Civil Liberties Union to try to stop the board of censors from being formed. By the end of October 1948, the Board of Supervisors was backing away from its plan, which eventually was quietly dropped. David Berninghausen credits publicity brought on by librarians' efforts as the reason why the county board gave up the idea of a board of censors.⁵³

Another high profile battle over library books that ended well for librarians was fought in 1952 at the Boston Public Library, which was at the time one of the largest libraries in the United States. In September, the *Boston Post*, known at the time for its conservative politics, undertook a crusade in its pages to shine a light on subversive books at the library. First the paper recommended removing publications such as *New World Review*; when Milton Lord, the director of the library made it clear that the library was not going to give in, the *Post* then began to call for the library to "label the poison" so that browsers would not accidentally stumble upon materials the newspaper deemed dangerous. When the paper discovered that the library also subscribed to the Soviet newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia* and also owned books by Lenin and Stalin, it published more inflammatory articles. The paper's editors further attacked the library for displaying a copy of the *Communist Manifesto* as part of a display for the Great Books Foundation's adult education program.⁵⁴

Another notable aspect of the story is that the critics of the library charged that the collection was missing pro-American publications. The *Post* discovered that the library did not own a copy of Senator Joseph McCarthy's book, *McCarthyism, The Fight for America: Documented Answers to Questions Asked by Friend and Foe*. In response, the library said that it had already placed an order for the recently published book and was

waiting for its arrival. Throughout the whole episode, the director of the library refused to give in to the pressure.

Because of the controversy, the library attracted a number of new supporters as well as critics. The *Boston Herald*, a competitor of the *Post*, took up the defense of the library, writing against the *Post*'s removal and labeling proposals. A former FBI agent who had established a reputation as a professional red-hunter, Herbert Philbrick, proposed that the library actually stock more Communist and pro-Soviet materials; doing so would provide valuable materials for study by anticommunists who needed to know their enemy better. Representatives of local posts of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars weighed in on the side of the *Post*. The mayor of Boston, John B. Hynes, advocated labeling suspicious materials. When the trustees finally voted on what to do with the challenged materials, three trustees voted to retain the items, while two trustees voted to remove them: a slim victory.⁵⁵

Sometimes the path to success for libraries battling censors took a circuitous route. In early 1950, a local post of the American Legion in Peoria, Illinois, began pressuring the Peoria Public Library to stop circulating three films. In an article in *ALA Bulletin*, Berninghausen described the first film, *Boundary Lines*, as “a plea to eliminate the arbitrary boundaries which divide people from each other;” the second film, *Peoples of the USSR*, as a “series of travel shots picturing the varieties of peoples living in the USSR;” and the third film, *Brotherhood of Man*, as an “animated film, in color, on the subject of race relations.”⁵⁶

The ALA's Audio-Visual Board had included all three films on its list of “Films for Public Libraries.” When the library board in Peoria met in June to discuss the

controversial films, they declared the movies not to be subversive and decided to keep them in their circulating collection. When the ALA's Audio-Visual Board dropped *Peoples of the USSR* from its recommended list, the library board decided in July to remove the film from their collection. The chairman of the Audio-Visual Board, Raynard C. Swank, said the decision was made because the film was "inferior and out of date;" he also noted that "in line with the Library Bill of Rights, no materials were either included or excluded because of race, nationality, political or religious views."⁵⁷

In September, the library board decided that the remaining two films should be removed from the circulating collection, and be available only for viewing within a screening room in the library. A board member, Richard H. Sherman, said that the "considering the international situation as it is today," the decision to restrict use of the films could be justified. He added that he didn't "believe that these organizations [objecting to the films] can be regarded as pressure groups and he said he would "take their word that the films should be removed." According to Louise Robbins' account, the librarian, Xenophon Smith "supported his action [to restrict use] with a statement that the Library Bill of Rights pertained only to books, not to films or other media."⁵⁸

The ALA realized that Library Bill of Rights did indeed leave that interpretation open. At the Midwinter meeting of the ALA in early 1951, the Council of the ALA approved a footnote to be appended to the Library Bill of Rights that would read, "By official action of Council on Feb. 3, 1951, the Library Bill of Rights shall be interpreted as applying to all materials and media of communication used or collected by libraries." Robbins argues that the ALA decided to make the change a footnote rather than a complete revision of the document, as a number of libraries had only recently formally

adopted the Library Bill of Rights and would be understandably bothered to have to go back and adopt yet another version. Once the document was changed, Xenophon Smith and the library board felt comfortable putting back into circulation the two films that had been restricted to library-use only, although that decision led to several more years of fruitless efforts by the American Legion to remove the films again.⁵⁹

In response to a perceived increase of censorship pressures in 1953, representatives from libraries and book publishers as well as notable public figures drafted a document that would eclipse the Library Bill of Rights in renown: the Freedom to Read statement. Jointly endorsed in June 1953 by the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, the Freedom to Read was created amidst a massive uproar over subversive publications in the overseas libraries operated by the State Department's International Information Administration (IIA). At the same time, the chairman in 1953 of the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom, William S. Dix, was reporting that challenges to library collections by local and national groups were underway in more than one hundred cities and towns. As Louise Robbins suggests, it was the overseas library battle, though, that played the pivotal role in the decision to draft the Freedom to Read document. To understand where that document came from, it is necessary to examine the origins of the overseas libraries.⁶⁰

In 1942, the United States started establishing a network of libraries abroad. During the Second World War, the libraries, which were managed by the Office of War Information, were intended to bolster the view of the Allies, especially Americans, as models of democracy and pluralism. At the war's end, management of the libraries

passed over to the State Department, which also managed the Voice of America. By the early 1950s, “the libraries were directed to encourage favorable views of America.”⁶¹

According to Robbins, many librarians had a different vision of the role of the overseas libraries:

The ALA, which had pioneered the use of libraries in cultural diplomacy and turned over the libraries it sponsored to the new agency [the IIA], embraced the idea that libraries should present what Truman called ‘a full and fair picture of American life and of the aims and policies of the United States government.’ The clearest demonstration of the strengths of the United States—pluralism, freedom of inquiry, and faith in the ability of citizens to govern themselves—could be found in libraries that provided a diversity of views, librarians believed.⁶²

As noted in a 1953 article in *Publishers’ Weekly*, the leading trade journal in the book publishing industry which offered book news and reviews that many librarians relied on to help them with decisions about what books to acquire, the ALA had been “intimately associated with the overseas library program...from its initiation.” The federal government had contracted out to the ALA the responsibility of opening and running the first such overseas libraries, which were in Latin America. Many of the librarians in the overseas libraries were ALA members. Furthermore, ALA leaders had served on a number of advisory committees and boards connected to the overseas libraries and the State Department’s information services.⁶³

In February 1953, Senator Joseph McCarthy focused the attention of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Government Operations onto reports of subversive books on the shelves of overseas libraries. His investigations into the collections of these libraries were the subject of front-page stories in newspapers for much of the spring and summer of 1953. Professional publications of the library world were also filled with updates and editorials on the story. Although an

examination of all events of the investigations and the State Department's reactions is beyond the scope of this essay, aspects of the controversy did figure into how librarians in the United States responded to threats to their local libraries. It will be necessary, first, to review the key events in the story.

McCarthy first began investigating the Voice of America program in early February 1953, looking for subversive content. As reported in the *New York Times*, the State Department, which oversaw the overseas radio network, reported to McCarthy's committee that it had just ordered "that no material from books or other works of Communists or other controversial authors be used under any conditions, in the American drive to pierce the Iron Curtain with the truth about democracy." McCarthy's committee then began to look at other outlets in the State Department's information services that might be spreading spread of subversive ideas. The next program targeted was the overseas libraries.⁶⁴

McCarthy brought IIA leaders to his committee and grilled them about what kinds of books they had in their libraries. He focused initially on whether books by Howard Fast were in the libraries; as the weeks of investigations dragged on, he expanded the list of suspect authors considerably. Notable among the authors under the committee's microscope was Gene Weltfish, the Columbia University anthropology professor whose written works had were the source for *Brotherhood of Man*, one of the films under fire in 1950 at the Peoria Public Library. Appearing before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee in October 1952, Weltfish had taken the protections of the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination in her refusal to respond to questions about whether she had been a Communist. When McCarthy's committee began

investigating whether the overseas libraries might have her books in their collections, Weltfish was brought before the committee, where she again declined to answer questions about her political associations.⁶⁵

In response, the IIA began to issue a series of confusing and often contradictory classified directives about what should be allowed to remain in the library; some of those directives were leaked to the public amidst the controversy and were widely reported on. As noted by historian Ted Morgan, the libraries had previously operated under a policy that indicated the libraries should maintain balanced collections. One of the more widely reported directives issued after McCarthy began looking at the overseas libraries ordered that the libraries remove any works by “any controversial persons, Communists, fellow travelers, ‘et cetera.’” What “et cetera” was supposed to mean precisely was left unclarified in the directive; this lack of clarity in accusation is reminiscent of Senator McCarthy’s method of making accusations based on vague evidence or no proof at all. Louise Robbins suggests that because of the directives, the “flow of books to the overseas libraries slowed to a trickle as ISC [Information Centers Service] personnel tried to gain security clearance for every author and title.”⁶⁶

In April 1953, lawyer Roy Cohn and G. David Schine, who had been serving as McCarthy’s investigators, embarked on a trip to Europe to examine firsthand what books were actually on the shelves of the overseas libraries. Ted Morgan argues that the pair’s nosy investigations caused an uproar in Europe; by the twelfth day of their trip, as they came to London, they “were so badly ridiculed in the British press that they stayed only five hours and flew back to New York.” In Louise Robbins’ account of the library controversy, she says that “one officer [in an overseas library] called their visit ‘an

absolutely obscene show,' while another reported pocketing a Dashiell Hammett paperback until an inspection visit ended."⁶⁷

The terms of the debate over library censorship were radically altered on June 14, when President Eisenhower gave a commencement address at Dartmouth College in which he implored the students to be courageous in troubling times:

Don't join the book burners. Don't think you are going to conceal faults by concealing evidence that they ever existed. Don't be afraid to go into your library and read every book as long as any document does not offend our own ideas of decency. That should be the only censorship. How will we defeat Communism unless we know what it is? . . . Now we have got to fight it with something better. Not try to conceal the thinking of our own people.⁶⁸

Louise Robbins points out that "the press interpreted Eisenhower's remarks as directed against McCarthy's attack on the overseas libraries," something which Eisenhower denied a few days later. Despite Eisenhower's efforts to undercut the power of what he said at Dartmouth, his statement that there might be book burners afoot drew immediate attention and inquiries.⁶⁹

On June 15, the day after Eisenhower's speech, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles said publicly that eleven books taken from overseas libraries in recent months had been burned. Until this point, reports in the library press of book-burnings in library censorship battles had been very rare. In February 1952, the *New York Times* reported that five or six books from the high school library of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, had been burned "after being criticized by a women's civic group for the way they dealt with socialism and sex." In mid-May 1953, the city manager of San Antonio, Texas, suggested at a city council meeting that the mayor's suggestion the books by Communists in the public library be affixed with warning labels did not go far enough; instead, he suggested

that the books just be burned. Although San Antonio never did burn books or even label them, it did limit the number of potentially controversial books the library bought over the next few years.⁷⁰

The charge that an agency of the federal government was burning books made front page news in the *New York Times*; articles in the paper that followed up on the story continued through the month. By June 1953, use of the terms “book burners” or “book burning” became more frequent in the press; in the following years the phrases came to refer not just to those who would literally set fire to controversial books in libraries but also those were just interested in removing any materials from libraries. For example, at an address given in June 1953 to alumni of the Wisconsin Library School, librarian Richard Armour satirically gave specific advice on how to burn books:

An increasingly popular place for book burning is the middle of a street or, even, better, a town square. This makes possible the burning of a larger number of books at one time, and the fire may become intense enough for the burning of whole books, thus eliminating the necessity of the painstaking separation of pages referred to above. Another advantage is that this type of burning can be watched by a large number of townspeople and can become something of a social event. Community sings often develop spontaneously on such occasions, and many persons stay late to reminisce about other book burnings and to tell stories by the waning fire.⁷¹

As part of a special issue on censorship in libraries, the *New Republic* offered a group of articles under the main title of “A Special New Republic Report on Book Burning,” which featured an article by Harvard College librarian Laurence Kipp, titled “Boston—The Library Did Not Burn,” that was actually about an attempt to remove a copy of Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* from a display in the Boston Public Library of great books.⁷²

In response to growing threats of censorship, members of the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom had, even before McCarthy's attacks on the overseas libraries in the spring of 1953, been planning a conference that would, as Robbins put it, "formulate a broadly based and widely accepted statement on the freedom to read." As McCarthy and his colleagues began their probes into the collections of the overseas libraries, one member of the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom, Dan Lacy, "believed that if McCarthy succeeded in his attacks on the overseas libraries, 'there was every reason to believe' that he would 'go after' domestic libraries." Lacy, who had served until 1952 as the director of the Information Centers Service of the IIA, went on to be the deputy chief assistant Librarian of Congress, and by 1953 was the managing director of the American Book Publishers Council, the main trade group for the book publishing industry.⁷³

On May 2 and 3, 1953, the ALA and the American Book Publishers Council hosted a conference in Rye, New York whose objectives were "to define the rights and responsibilities of publishers and librarians in maintaining the freedom of Americans to read what they choose," "to assay recent developments tending to restrict this freedom," to consider where lines should be drawn between permissible expression and impermissible expression, and who is to draw the lines," and "to ascertain the public interest in this area and, if the group agrees, consider ways of asserting it." The twenty-five attendees included representatives from the library world (such as Luther Evans, the Librarian of Congress, who served as chair and had been recently named to head UNESCO; William Dix, the chair of the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom), the publishing industry (such as Cass Canfield, the chairman of Harper Brothers; Ralph McGill, an editor at the *Atlanta Constitution*), and leaders from other arenas (such as

Harold Laswell, a professor of law and political science at Yale University who had written extensively on the subject of propaganda; Bernard Berelson of the Ford Foundation; Thomas J. Wilson, former president of the American Association of University Professors). That the ALA and the American Book Publishers Council were able to bring together such a notable group is testament to the effectiveness of these associations in building an alliance devoted to the common cause of intellectual freedom.⁷⁴

By the close of the conference, a committee was put together to draft the Freedom to Read statement. By the end of May, the conference attendees had approved the draft and passed it along to the American Book Publishers Council and the ALA for the endorsement of those associations. The document begins with an introductory statement that the “freedom to read [that] is essential to our democracy” is presently “under attack” by “private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country [who] are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label ‘controversial’ books, to distribute lists of ‘objectionable’ books or authors, and to purge libraries.” These attempts at suppression “rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad.” The authors of the statement note that they are “aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression” and that “these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television.”⁷⁵

The document then continues by affirming seven propositions. First, “it is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of

views and expressions.” Second, “publishers and librarians do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available.” Third, “it is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book solely on the basis of the personal history of political affiliations of the author.” Fourth, although “the present laws of obscenity should be vigorously enforced,” “there is no place in our society for extra-legal efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or inhibit the efforts of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.” Fifth, “it is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.” Sixth, “it is the responsibility of publishers and librarians...to contest encroachments upon that freedom [to read].” Seventh, publishers and librarians have a responsibility “to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality of thought and expression” and thereby “demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.”⁷⁶

Louise Robbins points out that once the first draft was written at the conference, the plan was for it to be discussed at the June 20-21 pre-conference on intellectual freedom that was to be held in Whittier, California, several days before the annual meeting of the ALA, where it would in turn be formally introduced to the ALA membership in attendance and voted on. Robbins also proposes that one of the attendees of the May 2-3 conference that drafted the Freedom to Read statement, Douglas Black (who was the president of Doubleday and of the American Book Publishers Council), may have prompted Eisenhower to speak against the “book-burners” at the Dartmouth

commencement address. According to documents that Robbins found, Eisenhower and Black had been good friends since the days when Eisenhower had been the president of Columbia University and Black a trustee there. She writes that Black “did speak with Eisenhower a few days before the speech, and the day after he wrote a warm letter of thanks to ‘Dear Ike,’ telling him about the upcoming conference and sending along the not-yet-adopted Freedom to Read.”⁷⁷

The day after the ALA formally endorsed the Freedom to Read statement at its annual conference, the president of the ALA read aloud to meeting attendees a letter from President Eisenhower that supported the association's efforts to fight censorship. Robert Downs, the president of ALA, had written Eisenhower congratulating him on his commencement address at Dartmouth. In the letter of reply, Eisenhower praised the efforts of librarians who “serve the precious liberties of our nation: freedom of inquiry, freedom of the spoken and written word, freedom of exchange of ideas.” He continued by condemning the censors:

For in order to fight totalitarians who exploit the ways of freedom to serve their own ends, there are some zealots who—with more wrath than wisdom—would try to defend freedom by denying freedom's friends the opportunity of studying Communism in its entirety—its plausibilities, its falsities, its weaknesses.

But we know that freedom cannot be served by the devices of the tyrant. . . . And any who act as if freedom's defenses are to be found in suppression and suspicion and fear confess a doctrine that is alien to America.⁷⁸

Coverage of the endorsement of the Freedom to Read statement at the ALA meeting and Eisenhower's letter to the association was widespread. Robbins details the rush of publicity and goodwill that the document garnered for the ALA, noting that not only was it praised in numerous newspaper editorials across the country, but it was also

endorsed by other organizations, such as “the American Booksellers Association, the National Commission for the Defense of Democracy through Education [an organization affiliated with the National Education Association], the American Newspaper Guild, and the American Bar Association.”⁷⁹

The *New York Times*, which carried stories about the intellectual freedom pre-conference that immediately preceded the ALA’s annual meeting, offered an editorial on June 27, 1953, urging that copies of the Freedom to Read statement “be prominently displayed and readily available in every public library at home or abroad.” The editors went on to say that the document “seems today to belong, civilian and unofficial thought it is, with America’s outstanding state papers.”⁸⁰

At the June 1953 conference of the ALA, the association staked out another position on a highly public matter. An “Overseas Library Statement” was issued that defended the past acquisition practices of the libraries and protested the current attacks and systems for clearing authors before their works could be acquired. Although this document too was mentioned in the press coverage of the conference, it was the Freedom to Read that was put in the spotlight. The ALA and the American Book Publishers Council were quick to seize upon the momentum they had achieved. The statement and President Eisenhower’s Dartmouth speech were published together in booklet form. The American Book Publishers Council freely distributed individual copies and sold bulk copies at cost.⁸¹

Much as the Library Bill of Rights became part of the landscape of librarianship, so too did the Freedom to Read statement grow to become oft-cited landmark. Articles in the library press began to urge local libraries to adopt the Freedom to Read statement as

library policy. For example, the assistant librarian at the Milwaukee Public Library, Meredith Bloss, suggested in an article in *ALA Bulletin* that a librarian can “place the library program firmly in the community” by “having a written book selection policy adopted as a formal action by the library’s governing authority; having the Library Bill of Rights and the statement on the Freedom to Read adopted as integral parts of library policy; giving notice of these actions to the community.”⁸²

As noted in a 1954 article in *Library Journal* by Paul Bixler, a librarian from Antioch College who served as secretary of the ALA’s Committee on Intellectual Freedom in the early 1950s, one of the “best uses to which the ‘Freedom to Read’ statement has been put is for discussion by groups in the American Heritage Project.” Launched in 1951 and funded by the Ford Foundation, this ALA program initiated a “nationwide program of reading and discussion groups on ALA’s 75th anniversary theme, the Heritage of the U.S.A. in Times of Crisis.” Library scholar Jean Preer explains that:

In the early years of the Cold War organizations of all sorts undertook to rekindle patriotic fervor and to define American values. The American Heritage Project was unique in its reliance on citizens to question the contemporary meaning of democracy and on reading and discussion groups and the democratic process itself to suggest answers.”⁸³

By January 1955, the chairman of the ALA’s Committee on Intellectual Freedom, William S. Dix, was suggesting that “while objective measurements are impossible, there can be little doubt that ‘The Freedom to Read’ had a favorable effect upon public opinion at a critical time in publicizing and clarifying the position and the responsibilities of librarians and publishers.” Furthermore, he believed that “in nearly every [local] controversy [over challenged materials in libraries] the Library Bill of Rights or the Freedom to Read statement have been used effectively by local groups in mobilizing

public opinion.” A 1953 Gallup Poll in which “leaders in business and professions” in *Who’s Who* were asked about opinions on the subject of book banning indicated that 77 percent believed “books written by Communist authors, or by persons said to have Communist leanings” should not be “banned from library shelves in this country.” Interestingly, 42 percent did agree that such books should be banned from overseas libraries while 47 percent said they should not be. An article about the poll notes that many people “reconciled their different points of view on the two questions by qualifying their answers with comments to the effect that we are trying to sell the American way of life overseas, not the Communist way.”⁸⁴

Some librarians, too, seemed to have been inspired by the document. Louise Robbins quotes the following excerpt from librarian Jerome Cushman’s 1955 article in *ALA Bulletin* in which he spoke of the effect of the 1953 ALA conference:

There developed a solidarity of ranks within librarianship born of a sense of urgency and need which produced something new, at least in our immediate time. There developed a fighting profession made up of dedicated people who were sure of their direction, certain that full information was the most certain way to preserve the democratic processes. More important, the librarian, without any specific political power of his own, accepted the challenge of twentieth century Know-Nothingism and played a leading role in calling to the attention of the American people some of the seemingly forgotten facts of our heritage. This gave him the opportunity to pass one of the acid tests of professionalism—acceptance of social and political responsibility, and in all good candor, there are some good and true reasons for us to have some pardonable pride in our profession.⁸⁵

What is not clear, though, is the extent to which the forces of censorship had been beaten back. Paul Bixler wrote in December 1954 that librarians “have won the big publicity battle for intellectual freedom in libraries—at least that battle has begun to go our way,” but “we have scarcely begun to fight,” as the “fear and intimidation in small

public and in school libraries, particularly those in small communities, is greater today than it was a year ago.” He also noted “a reluctance on the part of many librarians to discuss” the ALA’s statements on intellectual freedom and “sometimes to act on them.” He also sensed “a feeling that in some quarters, too, that these charters of freedom have been laid down like an expression of pious wish-fulfillment, but that library performance has to be ‘practical,’ meaning it has to be tempered to the most vociferous opinion.”⁸⁶

That tempering to “vociferous opinion” can be seen clearly in the response by the IIA to the attacks by Senator McCarthy on the overseas libraries. All the momentum, goodwill, and inspiration generated by the Freedom to Read statement, was not enough to protect the overseas libraries from continued and debilitating attacks by McCarthy’s committee in the summer and fall of 1953. The toll on the libraries was severe. In November 1953, an article in *Publishers’ Weekly* said that books by at least forty-six authors had been pulled from shelves in libraries around the world and had not been restored despite promises by the State Department that some would be returned. A February 1954 report of the United States Advisory Commission on Information, an official group that was headed by the editor of the *Christian Science Monitor*, noted that “the wide and unfavorable publicity that resulted from one of the Congressional investigations gave the agency such a bad name that professionally competent persons were reluctant to accept employment in it.” The report, as quoted in the *New York Times*, went on to say that the work of the agency “might have been ‘largely offset, if not destroyed’ by the criticism from home.” By June 1954, Franklin Burdette, the chief of the United States Information Agency (the IIA was renamed in late 1953 and made

independent of the State Department), reported that of the 122 librarians employed in the libraries in April 1953, only 60 were still there.⁸⁷

By late 1953, the library press was offering more articles that featured local libraries winning against pressure groups trying to remove or curtail the use of books and other library materials. One interpretation of this development, though, might be there was no actual increase the number of victories on the part of libraries but instead only a growth in the number of stories in the library press about such victories. It may be the case that the editors of *ALA Bulletin*, *Library Journal*, *Wilson Library Bulletin*, and *Publishers' Weekly* were more radical in their defense of intellectual freedom than the majority of librarians and wanted to offer stories in their magazines that would inspire librarians to stand up against censors.

The ALA was clearly taking a leadership role in its defense of library freedom. Not only had the ALA issued well-publicized proclamations of intellectual freedom (the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read statement) as well as resolutions protesting specific censorship attacks, but its main periodical, *ALA Bulletin*, which was sent to all members of the ALA, featured stories nearly every month shining a light on the efforts of pressure groups. The *ALA Bulletin* also offered editorials and think pieces that advanced theoretical defense of intellectual freedom and provided practical steps librarians should take when first confronted by challenges to materials in their collections.

The high point of the ALA's efforts to spread the message to its members came in the November 1953 issue of *ALA Bulletin*, which was given over entirely to the subject of intellectual freedom. The cover featured a cartoon by Herblock, who for a number of

years had been offering trenchant satires of McCarthyism in his cartoons for the *Washington Post*. The cartoon features a group of angry investigators inspecting a primary school classroom—some are rifling through the drawers of the teacher’s desk, peeking behind a map on the wall, and making notes while scrutinizing a poster of Jefferson—while two more, who have a briefcase labeled “State and Local ‘Anti-Subversive’ Committees in the U.S.,” are grilling a terrified teacher, asking her, “You read books, eh?” Articles in this special issue of *ALA Bulletin* have titles such as, “No Concessions” and “Let Freedom Ring.” Included in the magazine are reprints of the Freedom to Read statement, President Eisenhower’s letter on intellectual freedom that was read at the June 1953 annual conference of the ALA, the Library Bill of Rights, the Statement of the American Bar Association on the Freedom to Read, the Overseas Library Statement, and a bibliography of books on freedom of the press, intellectual freedom, and civil liberties.

It should be no surprise, though, that librarians did not all agree with the ALA’s position on intellectual freedom. A number of librarians offered opinions on why some of their colleagues were afraid to purchase materials that might be judged controversial and caved in when confronted by pressure to remove materials. Helen Haines, whose book *Living with Books* had been since 1935 one of the leading textbooks in the art of acquisitions for library collections, suggested in a 1948 article that librarians “are apt to yield their own will power to *laissez faire*, to any easy indifference, an unconscious escapism, in their relation to the books that are building materials not for war, hatred, and intolerance...but for peace, for understanding, for tolerance, for world co-operation and security”; Haines well knew that books on such topics were frequently targeted by

pressure groups. Her quote suggests that some librarians felt it was beyond their control to maintain a library that was immune from the currents of controversy swirling through society at the time.⁸⁸

Another librarian, Helen A. Ridgeway, echoing Haines' point of view, raised the issue in 1953 of "unidentified censorship," which she described as the "tendency, particularly in the small library with a part-time schedule and a low book budget, to spend the limited funds available on 'safe' books and thus avoid controversy." She went on to note that taking a stand against censorship is hard for the librarian in a small town, where "defending free access to all books may have deep personal implications" because "everyone knows everyone else" and friendships may be lost.⁸⁹

The Librarian of Congress in 1952, Luther Evans, commented on the difficulty of knowing to what extent librarians were being overly cautious in their collection building efforts. He noted that as pressure groups were setting up "forbidden zones of thought," a dangerous situation was emerging that:

has caused many librarians throughout this land to chisel a bit on the doctrines by which they have lived in the past. The amount of that chiseling can never be known, because so much of the evidence is locked in the inner consciousness of frightened librarians.⁹⁰

Robert D. Leigh, a political scientist from the University of Chicago, told attendees at the ALA's 1948 annual conference in Atlantic City that when actual challenges are made to a library's collections "the more prudent tradition is the one I observe in my visits—of bowing quickly to pressures, and of retiring questioned books to the inner sanctum of the librarian's office, where they remain, to save the librarian's conscience against burning them and to avoid any trouble."⁹¹

The subject of self-censorship by librarians was discussed extensively at the ALA's first conference on intellectual freedom, which was held in New York in 1952 a few days prior to the ALA's annual conference in New York. A *New York Times* article summarizing the intellectual freedom conference mentioned that speakers addressed the "indirect influence of a widespread demand for conformity, causing over-sensitive librarians to censor their own activities in fear of arousing criticism and censure." The president of the ALA, E.W. McDiarmid, expressed "doubt about the ability of many librarians to stand up against pressures" and "urged librarians to insist upon complete freedom in their selections."⁹²

Librarians at public school libraries, in particular, were more likely to be under pressure from censors than librarians working in other kinds of libraries. Like the public library, school libraries were tax-supported institutions whose mission and activities were frequently contested by those who felt their tax dollars gave them the right to criticize. The fact that school libraries had children as their exclusive patron base made them even more the focus of attention by local pressure groups. In May 1952, the *New York Times* conducted a "nation-wide study of book censorship" that included "data obtained from forty-eight commissioners of education" as well as "interviews with many of nation's educational spokesmen." The study found that amid "a concerted campaign...under way over the country to censor school and college textbooks, reading materials and other visual aids," "librarians are intimidated by outside pressures in their choice of books and other materials." The report added that, "unwilling to risk a public controversy, [librarians] meekly accept the requests of self-appointed censorship groups."⁹³

Compelling evidence of librarians who held back in their acquisition efforts is hard to come by. The fact that a library failed to purchase a book written by a controversial author does not offer any hints about the motivations of the librarian making purchase decisions for the library. There is clear evidence of librarians giving in to pressure to remove library materials after criticism by pressure groups—the library press in the late 1940s and early 1950s regularly featured stories about libraries that were forced to purge books—but there is not much evidence that helps explain why librarians pulled materials from the shelves. One can make inferences about any number of reasons why a librarian might accede to a pressure group’s demands: the librarian might actually agree with the demand; the librarian might be compelled by the library board of trustees or library administration under threat of dismissal or other recriminations; or the librarian might plan to remove the materials only temporarily so that they could be returned when the controversy blows over.⁹⁴

Evidence that some librarians might believe a pressure group to be correct in its aims is can be found in the occasional article written by a librarian in which the author expresses doubt about the ALA’s ardent defense of the right of libraries to collect controversial materials. In 1952, two librarians at a public library in Goshen, Indiana, wrote a letter to the chair of the Newberry-Caldecott Committee, an ALA committee that annually named the winners of the Newberry Medal for the best work of children’s fiction and the Caldecott Medal for the best children’s picture book. Mildred Cotton and Jean Arnold wanted to voice their complaint with the choice for that year’s winner of the Caldecott Medal, William Lipkind’s *Finders Keepers*. As described by library historian Christine Jenkins, the librarians seemed to have found in the book’s artwork evidence

that the book “was a subversive text aimed at urging North and South Koreans to ‘unite and drive the United Nations out of Korea.’” By offering its seal of approval on the book, the ALA was giving the signal to children’s librarians that it was worth acquiring this book for their library’s collections; as far as the two librarians from Indiana were concerned, this was tantamount to the ALA encouraging the acquisition of a subversive book.⁹⁵

A more obvious example of a disagreement over how libraries should handle subversive books in their collections can be seen in the labeling controversies. In the 1940s and 1950s, the debate over labeling covered two related practices. Labeling was sometimes used to refer to the system of stamping books to indicate that the author had known Communist affiliations. A variant system of labeling proposed that not only should books be stamped to indicate subversive content but that the stamped books should be taken out of a library’s circulating collection and put in the reference collection or on reserve. A stamped book shunted to the reference collection could still be found on open shelves in the library, but items moved to reserve required a patron to ask a library staff member for the item. Books put on reserve or in reference were not allowed to leave the library, keeping them under tight control. To see how librarians disagreed on whether such schemes violated the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read, it is necessary to examine some situations where labeling programs were proposed by pressure groups and where they were put in place.

The case most discussed in library publications took place in Montclair, New Jersey. In late 1950, a New Jersey chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) began pressuring local libraries to affix a stamp to “publications which advocate or favor

Communism, or which are issued or distributed by any Communist organization or any other organization formally designated by any authorized government official or agency as Communist or subversive.” The stamped books would “be obtainable [to readers in libraries] by signing suitable applications.” Not only was the SAR insisting that the books be identified as subversive, but they also wanted them segregated from the rest of the collection.⁹⁶

When the ALA’s Committee on Academic Freedom first heard about this proposal, they all agreed they would take a stand against it because the “implications of this sort of politburo arrangement are repulsive to people reared in the democratic tradition.” The labeling program would have required countless hours of staff time at the library to review materials and affix a variety of labels to different books. The committee recognized the “practicability and financial problems of such a project,” but decided its opposition to the labeling scheme would be “on the basis of the principle involved.”⁹⁷

After the Montclair SAR chapter was put off by Margery Quigley, the director of the local library, the SAR contacted the president of ALA directly to suggest that his association adopt their labeling program as ALA policy. Again the ALA’s Committee on Intellectual Freedom was consulted. The committee researched the issue more deeply, finding other examples from around the country where labeling schemes had been proposed. The committee also contacted twenty-four librarians around the country to poll them on their response to a labeling program. Twenty librarians responded, all of whom opposed the plan. The committee’s report reprinted the comments of some of the respondents, such as one who believed “labeling is not merely ‘an attempt to prejudice the reader.’ It is surely in the minds of some of its proponents an attempt to frighten or

control him.” Another said, “I oppose all efforts to predispose readers for or against any materials.”⁹⁸

One respondent’s comments, though, illustrate the ambivalence that some librarians felt about providing access to books by Communists:

Personally, I...think labelling is as dangerous as the evils it may attempt to correct—and I am aware that some real evils do exist.... Recognizing this time as a period of danger, and also realizing that the Soviet Communists do not play under the same set of rules as does a democracy, I still vote against any labelling program such as the SAR requests.⁹⁹

The perception by some librarians that communism represented a real threat was dealt with in different ways. This librarian’s response admits the danger, but suggests that it does not outweigh the principles of intellectual freedom. Even the ALA admitted the dangers of communism, although the association’s response certainly was not as hysterical as that of groups like the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Chamber of Commerce, the DAR, and the like. It is notable, though, that the ALA’s resolution opposing labeling, which was approved in July 1951 and represented the culmination of the association’s investigation of the labeling proposal made by the Montclair SAR, made concessions to the potential threats of Soviet and Communist influence in America:

Although we are all agreed that communism is a threat to the free world, if materials are labeled to pacify one group, there is no excuse for refusing to label any item in the library’s collection. Because communism, fascism, or other authoritarianisms tend to suppress ideas and attempt to coerce individuals to conform to a specific ideology, American librarians must be opposed to such “isms.” We are, then, anti-communist, but we are also opposed to any other group which aims at closing any path to knowledge.¹⁰⁰

Even Emerson Greenaway—the stalwart defender of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read who served for a while as the chair of the ALA’s Committee on

Intellectual Freedom—was willing to speak about the dangers of communism. At the All American Conference to Combat Communism on May 22, 1954, he told his audience that a balanced collection of books in a library is necessary as an “aid to combat the threatened growth of communism at home and abroad.” He asked his listeners “how, for example, is it possible for us to combat communism if we do not take the trouble to study and know what it is we oppose.” Greenaway’s sentiment—libraries have to include books considered subversive or as propaganda so Americans can know their enemy—was one commonly expressed by those who stood up for the freedom to read in libraries.¹⁰¹

Some librarians, though, did not agree with the ALA and the Committee on Intellectual Freedom in opposing labeling in libraries. At the ALA’s first conference on intellectual freedom in June 1952, Ralph Munn, the director of the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh, “aroused considerable discussion when he suggested that perhaps overt propaganda should be labeled as such and that disguised propaganda be barred entirely.” It is notable that such an opinion was expressed at a conference that attracted librarians who were interested in helping the ALA in its fight for intellectual freedom. Also noteworthy was the fact that Munn, the director of a major urban public library, expressed an opinion that flatly contradicted the ALA’s policy on labeling passed a year earlier.¹⁰²

Munn, though, was not alone in questioning the ALA’s stance on labeling. A former ALA president and the current director of the Detroit Public Library, Ralph Ulveling, roiled the library community with his proposal made at the ALA’s annual meeting in July 1951. Earlier on the day of July 13, the ALA Council had formally approved the resolution opposing labeling; later, Ulveling

spoke before a general membership meeting at the conference about his fears of providing propaganda in a time of crisis. He cautioned his audience that “our way of life and all the freedoms that it entails are being challenged by an adversary that controls vast areas of the earth’s surface.” Public libraries, he argued, are presented with a “basic problem” in their adherence to a policy of trying to provide “material presenting all points of view concerning the issues of our times, international, national, and local.” He told his listeners that America and Russia are in an “ideological war where propaganda, good and bad, is given importance second only to military strategy.”

Libraries, he was suggesting, were in danger of providing aid to the enemy by naively providing its propaganda to American readers. Ulveling wondered if perhaps the impulse to provide all points of view in library collections should apply more to large research or central libraries and not to every single branch library. While “sound factual information on Communism” would be appropriate for both branch libraries and central libraries, “communist expressions of opinion or misleading propaganda would be found in only the Reference service,” mostly at the central library.¹⁰³

Ulveling’s proposal was debated in the library press for many months. One voice in the debate, Frederic G. Melcher, who was the president of the publishing company R.R. Bowker and a member of the Committee on Intellectual Freedom, wrote in November 1951 that the ALA’s policy on labeling had proved its usefulness in “Burbank, California, where it helped to defeat an attempt to require all California libraries to label ‘subversive’ materials.” In September 1954, the Board of Trustees of the Burbank Public

Library convinced the Burbank City Council to pass a resolution that called “upon the California League of Cities to approve the labeling of subversive and immoral books in California public libraries.” Librarians from the Los Angeles area as well as many other citizens showed up at later city council meetings to protest the resolution. The California Library Association registered its opposition with the California League of Cities, which later declined to act on Burbank’s proposal. What happened in Burbank reveals another split in the library world about how to respond to controversial materials; this divide was between librarians, who generally had basic commitment to the principles embodied in the Library Bill of Rights, and library boards of trustees, who were not librarians and often privileged freedom from controversy over the freedom to read.¹⁰⁴

Ulveling seemed to have gotten the last shot in the exchange over his proposal. In the March 1952 issue of ALA Bulletin, he tried to clarify misunderstandings he found in the articles written in response to his proposal. He also tried to be clearer about the nature of his proposal. He claimed that the acquisition policies at the Detroit Public Library were actually quite liberal. His proposal was his attempt to float an idea for dealing with the tough issue of whether small branch libraries that were part of a system tied to a large, central library, really were required to have the same dedication to providing materials on all sides. Ulveling was not claiming that the Detroit Public Library would refrain from purchasing controversial materials but rather that it would not try to purchase such works for each branch. If the “library” that one was buying materials for on a neutral basis could be taken to mean the system of libraries in Detroit rather than each individual branch in the system, then the Detroit Public Library could maintain its efforts to purchase

materials on all points of view, but not do so under the pretense that every branch was doing the same.

Ulveling wanted the ALA to devise recommendations about building balanced library collections that were more “definite and precise” than what could be found in the Library Bill of Rights and the labeling resolution. He pointed out that “even among the libraries that profess to operate under the principles of the Library Bill of Rights there is great divergence in action taken on a particular controversial book.” Further evidence of a division among librarians is found in his claim that he received a notable amount of “fan mail...from all parts of the country” after his proposal was reprinted in the library press.¹⁰⁵

The continued difference of opinion over whether libraries were justified in labeling and sequestering books based on their content can be seen in a June 1953 survey of librarians conducted by the *New York Times*. At the time, the headlines were full of stories about what books were being purged from the overseas libraries; with that controversy in mind, the *New York Times* decided to see if domestic libraries were purging or limiting the use of works by Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. While the librarians at the thirty public libraries contacted by the paper all indicated that the books in question could be borrowed without restrictions or special request, librarians at some Catholic universities revealed that those works were often not part of the general circulating collection.

James W. Dyson, the head librarian at Loyola University in New Orleans, said the collection included books by Marx, but not by Lenin and Stalin. Books by Marx, though, were only available from the reserve collection; students had to have had the book

assigned as reading in course before they could borrow it. At Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, the newspaper learned from the president that “books that would propose communism as something good were kept in a separate locked section of the library and used for reference under direction by students studying for thesis work.” Mary K. Dempsey, the university librarian at Marquette University in Milwaukee, explained that works by Marx, Lenin, and Stalin were in the course reserve collection only. As was the case at Loyola University, the only students who could borrow the books were ones who had the materials assigned to them in their courses. The list of students who had borrowed the books was then sent on to the Archbishop of Milwaukee (what the Archbishop did with those lists was not explained).¹⁰⁶

While it is evident from articles in the library press, newspapers, and magazines that at least some libraries were labeling books by sequestering them, there are few stories of programs to physically label books or stamp them. One case that did get mentioned in library publications involved a law passed in December 1953 by the Alabama legislature requiring textbooks to include a stamp “‘indicating clearly and with particularity’ that the author is or is not a ‘known advocate of communism or Marxist Socialism.’” As librarian Paul Bixler pointed out, the law would have required librarians “to comb their entire book collections, pull out the ‘questionable’ volumes, and affix the labels.” An April 1954 case challenging the law resulted in the courts declaring in May that the legislation was unconstitutional.¹⁰⁷

Texas also tried to institute legislation that would label all textbooks. In May 1953, a labeling bill was introduced, but when it finally passed in July “was so watered down that it mean[t] next to nothing” because “it [was] permissive, giving municipal

bodies the right to label books if they so desire.”¹⁰⁸ Although the state-wide measure petered out in a weak law that did not seem to have been enforced, in San Antonio, a local debate over labeling led to several years of drama. When a local housewife, Myrtle Glasscock Hance, compared “various ‘un-American activities’ listings against the San Antonio Public Library card catalogue,” she found more than five hundred books to object to. The list she developed was published in pamphlet form as “REaD READING” and used in many other parts of the country by groups checking up on their local public and school libraries. Hance and the mayor’s wife, both members of a patriotic organization, the Minute Women, were able to convince the mayor to propose a labeling scheme before the city council in May 1953. It was at this meeting that the city manager famously suggested burning the books rather than labeling them, a detail reported widely in the library press.

Although the library board resisted any labeling scheme, when the pro-labeling forces on the City Council became the majority, the board was replaced with one sympathetic to Hance’s views. According to a 1955 article in *Saturday Review*, the “library director Miss Julia Grothaus and her staff were all intimidated into leaving off purchase lists those books likely to prove objectionable to right-wing trustees.” The new board “loaded book and periodical lists with ultra-conservative titles, screened gift books to eliminate those they did not like, and gave favored display to right-wing materials.” A new library board was elected in the summer of 1955 that was committed to autonomy for the librarians in their acquisitions, thereby ending two years of censorship. Although the library battle began with a labeling scheme, due to community opposition it seemed to have been dropped prior to the election of the conservative library board.¹⁰⁹

It is fair to suggest that librarians were, at least in their public actions, more unified in resisting pressures on library collections than they were in protecting librarians from being dismissed or investigated. During the McCarthy era, a librarian could lose a job not only by refusing to remove challenged library materials—as was the case with Ruth Brown, who was fired from the Bartlesville Public Library in 1950 after she refused to take the *Nation* and *New Republic* off the shelves—but also for failing to cooperate with a loyalty oath program or background investigation. The pressure for librarians to affirm that they had no affiliations past or present with Communists grew quickly after March 21, 1947, when President Truman issued Executive Order 9835 creating a loyalty program that would investigate all current federal employees in the executive branch as well as future job applicants.

By early May, the Library of Congress decided that although it was not covered by the order, it would voluntarily institute the Federal Loyalty Program. The Library of Congress had recently come under the scrutiny of the House Un-American Activities Committee; in January 1947, Ernie Adamson, the chief counsel of the committee, issued a 72-page report that said the Library of Congress “has become a haven for aliens and foreign-minded Americans” whose loyalties could be questioned. Eager to continue a program of post-war expansion, the Librarian of Congress, Luther Evans, was not willing to cross Congress, who controlled its budget. Louise Robbins suggests that Evans may have had “strong anticommunist feelings” that pushed him toward adopting the program; the poetry consultant to the Library Congress, Karl Shapiro, recalled that the “first thing Evans said to him when they met, in his ‘Texas way of talking man-to-man,’ was, ‘Shapiro, we don’t want any Communists or cocksuckers in this library.’”¹¹⁰

By October 1947, employees of the Library of Congress began turning in signed forms indicating whether or not they had any past or present affiliations with organizations considered subversive. They also were required to submit to fingerprinting. As the forms came in, they were passed on to the Civil Service Commission, a federal agency that “conducted preliminary investigations by checking names against the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), military intelligence, and the House Un-American Activities Committee, among others.” When the Civil Service Commission found something notable in a person’s file, the FBI “launched a full field investigation.” If the investigation led to a recommendation to dismiss the employee, that person could “appeal dismissals to the Loyalty Review board, which also coordinated all agency loyalty programs.”¹¹¹

Louise Robbins describes how Verner Clapp, the Chief Assistant Librarian of Congress and the person in charge of the loyalty program at the Library of Congress, found his job to be an unpleasant one: he “privately confessed ‘loss of sleep over this business’ to a colleague.” When “one suspect employee came to Clapp on August 27 to appeal his suspension,” Clapp “refused to lift the suspension” but he “offered to ‘expedite’ hearings and find counsel for the employee.” Clapp recorded “their exchange in his daily report: ‘Says he, “How does one prove one isn’t a Communist?” I wished I could tell him.’”¹¹²

The federal loyalty program took a new turn in the late spring of 1950 when the government began to purge employees suspected of homosexuality. According to the thinking at the time, homosexuals “were thought susceptible to blackmail and vulnerable to outside pressures because of moral weakness and emotional instability,” while “some

right-wing quarters also thought ‘sexual perversion’ was a Communist plot designed to undermine the government.”¹¹³

Robbins found that in 1950 fifteen employees were charged with “perversion,” nine of whom “resigned under pressure, one was fired, and five cases were pending.” She notes that more Library of Congress employees lost their jobs due to their sexual preferences than to any political affiliations. Between 1947 and 1956, Robbins says that of those employees whose political associations were suspect, only two were dismissed and four resigned.¹¹⁴

In October 1947, at the same time that the Library of Congress was launching its loyalty program, librarians at the County of Los Angeles Library system were rising up against a similar program recently instituted by the county’s Board of Supervisors. According to a report in the *New York Times*, the board “had directed all [county] employees to execute sworn affidavits setting forth affiliations (or lack of them) with any subversive group” and to take “an oath of loyalty to state and country.” The loyalty oath that employees were required to sign consisted of four parts; twenty librarians, including Judith Steiner, refused to sign the fourth part, in which employees were asked to indicate which of any 142 organizations listed had they “been a member of, or directly or indirectly supported or followed.” The *New York Times* article also mentioned that the “constitutional validity of the order was challenged in a suite brought by Mrs. Julia Learned Steiner, county library employee, who asserts she is not a member of any of the listed suspect organizations and contends that the loyalty check violates her rights as a citizen as guaranteed by the Federal and State Constitutions.”¹¹⁵

While the case was being fought in the courts, the California Library Association took their case to the public. At the organization's annual meeting in April 1948, the members approved a resolution opposing loyalty oaths, for reasons which included the argument that such programs cast a pall over the freedom of inquiry and of the intellect that should be at the core of a library's mission.¹¹⁶

The Supreme Court declined to hear the case of *Steiner v. County of Los Angeles* in 1949 because no "sanctions" had occurred against the county employees who refused to sign the fourth part of the oath (sixteen county employees, none of whom were librarians, had been dismissed after their refusal to sign any part of the oath). By December 1950, only eight of the twenty librarians who had not signed the fourth part of the oath remained employed at the library. While the court case had proceeded, life on the job for the librarians had been difficult, as the county had decided that those who did not sign the fourth part were not eligible for promotions.¹¹⁷

The ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom had been monitoring the situation in Los Angeles and decided in the spring of 1948 to ask the ALA leadership to consider a resolution opposing the use of loyalty oaths and investigations. At the June 1948 annual conference, the ALA Council approved the "Resolution Protesting Loyalty Investigations in Libraries." It is worth noting that passage of this resolution was far more contentious than that of the Library Bill of Rights, which also came out of the 1948 conference. Members of ALA Council voted thirty-two in favor of the loyalty resolution and twenty-three opposed. The main source of disagreement was whether the ALA should be protesting the "use" of loyalty investigations or the "abuse" of them. According to Louise Robbins, the most vocal opponent of the "use" phrasing was the director of the ALA's

office in Washington, Paul Howard, who also happened to be the president of the District of Columbia Library Association (an organization that many librarians working for the federal government belonged to). Other librarians on the ALA Council objected, too, for different reasons. Scott Adams, who was with the Army Medical Library, “challenged the notion that federal librarians felt their intellectual freedom threatened.” Another librarian “asserted that the government had a right to verify the loyalty of its citizens; the rights of free inquiry belonged only to those who were loyal.”¹¹⁸

For the next two years, the library press was filled with articles debating the merits of the resolution’s wording: “use” or “abuse.” Of all the topics relating to political pressure put on libraries during the McCarthy era, the issue of loyalty investigations provoked the most open disagreement among librarians. The ALA struggled to find the right tone in its resolution, revising it twice before considering it finalized. At the January 1949 midwinter meeting of the ALA, the “abuse” side won out, and the resolution was reissued with the revision. A year and a half later, at the 1950 annual meeting, the resolution was changed yet again to a form that remained unchanged until 1971; this time “abuse” was spelled out with specific, clarifying examples:

We condemn loyalty oaths and investigations which permit the discharge of an individual without a fair hearing. We hold that in a fair hearing the accused is furnished a statement of the charges against him, is allowed to see the evidence against him, is given an opportunity to prepare and to present his defense and to question his accusers with the aid of legal counsel, is presumed innocent until proven guilty, and is given the opportunity, if adjudged guilty, of judicial review.¹¹⁹

Although the ALA was not alone among professional associations and scholarly societies in protesting loyalty programs, with its original 1948 resolution it was one of the first to do so. By January 1950, as members of the ALA debated whether to revise their

resolution, they could compare their association's statement with those issued by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and by Phi Beta Kappa.¹²⁰

Louise Robbins argues that although the ALA was able to compose "brave words" demanding an end to loyalty programs, when it came to actually helping librarians who were under fire for refusing to sign oaths, the association did little. During the two-year period of discussion over the wording of the resolution, the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom and its Board of Personnel Administration worked jointly to draft the document. Once the final version of the resolution was approved in July 1950, the ALA decided to give the Board of Personnel Administration sole authority to investigate cases of abuse and recommend courses of action. Robbins points out that, "unlike censorship incidents, which the [Committee on Intellectual Freedom] constantly noisily decried, specific loyalty probes were not vocally opposed by the ALA."¹²¹

It is worth looking at several notable loyalty investigation cases, some of which were not reported in the library press. The oldest case actually had its roots in the Rapp-Coudert Hearings from 1940-1942. David Margolis was one of two librarians at City College in New York City who refused to cooperate with an investigation by the New York State Assembly into subversive teachers in public schools and colleges. Suspended from his job on April 21, 1941, his case dragged through the courts for seven years. On October 18, 1948, he was finally discharged officially from City College. With the ALA's first resolution opposing loyalty investigations just three months old, it is surprising that the library press carried no news of this development, even though it was covered by the *New York Times*.¹²²

Another case not mentioned in the library press did not actually involve a loyalty investigation but would seem to have been worth reporting. In September 1949, Joshua Bloch, the chief of the New York Public Library's Jewish Division, was accused of having notable ties to Communist groups. His critic, Alfred Kohlberg, was the chairman of the American Jewish League Against Communism who "funded a wide variety of Republican politicians, anticommunist organizations, and right-wing publications." The director of the library, Ralph Beals, denied the charge. The matter seemed to have ended without further accusations or calls for investigation.¹²³

In March 1950, a loyalty case arose that was featured in the library press. Elizabeth Haas, a librarian at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, was dismissed after she refused to sign a loyalty oath required by Maryland state law (the Ober Law). The ALA issued a resolution backing the call by the Maryland Library Association that the Ober Law be repealed. Despite the ALA's protest, it was unable to help Haas get her job back or do much to repeal the Ober Law.¹²⁴

Louise Robbins discusses a number of cases similar to that of Haas, where the ALA was powerless to stop a librarian from being dismissed. One notable story involves a librarian at the Seattle Public Library who in July 1951 refused to sign the loyalty oath. Jean Huot's refusal was accepted by John S. Richard, the library director, who added her comments to the minutes of a library meeting where the matter was discussed. Huot took time to mention that her professional obligation to the ALA required her to uphold the ALA's recently passed resolution against loyalty oaths. Her letter about the matter to David Berninghausen, who was now the executive secretary of the Committee on Intellectual Freedom, was forwarded to the Board of Personnel Administration. More

communication from her to the ALA about her pending dismissal failed to get the organization to make any commitment to help her. Eventually, she was forced to leave her position at the library. Robbins notes that the story was never covered in the library press. She also notes that Zoe Baur, a Quaker and a librarian, of Ephrata, Washington, was also fired around the same time for failure to sign an oath.¹²⁵

In some cases, a librarian ran afoul not just of a local loyalty board but of the federal government itself. For example, consider the case of Thomas Browne Bennett, which merited just a single blip in the library press:

A Federal Court jury has acquitted Thomas Browne Bennett, librarian at Fordham Hospital in New York, of a charge that he lied when he denied he was a Communist. The case arose in 1951 when Bennett filed a job application with the Federal Security Agency.¹²⁶

More serious cases involved librarians whose names were mentioned at hearings of HUAC or McCarthy's committee or who were actually subpoenaed. Louise Robbins recounts the story of Paul Martineau, who pleading on the grounds of the Fifth Amendment refused in 1953 to answer HUAC's questions about any political organizations with which he had been involved. Martineau job search for a new library position came to end shortly after his appearance before HUAC. Although Robbins did find out that the "case apparently was not referred to" the ALA's Board of Personnel Administration, she was unable to unearth more details about what happened to him.¹²⁷

The most famous case of a librarian appearing before a Congressional committee was that of Mary Knowles. Subpoenaed to appear on May 21, 1953, before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS) because she had been named by other witnesses as having been part of a Communist cell, Knowles used the Fifth Amendment to defend her decision not to answer questions asked of her; shortly thereafter, she was dismissed

from the public library in Norwood, Massachusetts. According to a 1955 *New York Times* article about her, “outside the committee, however, she freely admitted that she had been a secretary in the Samuel Adams School, Boston—now on the Attorney General’s list as a Communist-front organization—from 1945 to 1947.” After several months of unemployment, she found a temporary position at the William Jeanes Memorial Library in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania. Her new place of work was not a public library, but a private one run by the Plymouth Monthly Meeting of Friends. When in 1954 she convinced her employers that she had had no affiliation with any subversive groups since 1947, she was given a permanent position in the library.¹²⁸

When the local post of the American Legion and the Valley Forge Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution heard who was working in the library, they demanded she take the Pennsylvania state loyalty oath. When she refused with the backing of the library, her opponents began to call for her dismissal, even though she was not legally bound to take the oath, since the library was not a publicly funded institution. The Fund for the Republic, a nonprofit organization launched with money from the Ford Foundation and dedicated to assessing America’s anticommunist efforts, heard about the case and decided in 1955 to award the library \$5,000 to honor it “for courageous and effective defense of democratic principles.”¹²⁹

The national attention given to Mary Knowles seemed to have drawn the interest of members of SISS, who brought her before them on July 29, 1955, to answer more questions. The name of the man whose accusations brought her before the committee in 1953 was made public at this second hearing: Herbert Philbrick, the same FBI agent who

in 1952 came to the defense of the Boston Public Library when that institution was under fire for displaying a work by Karl Marx.

The Fund for the Republic, too, began to be the subject of inquiry of the SISS. In September 1955, the national commander of the American Legion criticized the Fund for the Republic because it was trying to minimize the dangers of communism. As SISS began its investigations of the organization, it decided to call Knowles back for her third appearance before the committee. When she refused to answer the committee's questions on September 15, 1955, she was cited for contempt. When she was found guilty of contempt, her appeals dragged on until 1960, when the United State Court of Appeals overturned her conviction. Throughout her years of legal troubles, the Plymouth Monthly Meeting of Friends tried their best to support her and even awarded her a promotion shortly after she "had been convicted and sentenced to four months in jail and fined \$500." It is worth noting, though, that the Quaker meeting had held off cashing the \$5,000 check from the Fund for the Republic for two years while it debated how to respond to the local and national pressure to fire Knowles and distance itself from the Fund for the Republic; in the end, the meeting allowed her to keep her job.¹³⁰

A final story involving the Library of Congress and the poet William Carlos Williams illustrates how pervasive the climate of fear over disloyal Americans was. As has been discussed, many libraries were forced to delve into the political beliefs of their employees due to loyalty programs (as was the case at the County of Los Angeles Public Library). Other libraries without loyalty programs saw some of their staff red-baited by local pressure groups (as was the case with Joshua Bloch at the New York Public Library) as well as by Congressional committees (Mary Knowles, for example). When

William Carlos Williams was first asked in 1948 by Luther Evans, the Librarian of Congress, to serve a one-year post as the library's poetry consultant, he had no idea that he would become entangled in the machinery of the library's loyalty program. Having to decline the offer in 1948 because of poor health, Williams contacted Evans in 1952 to say that he could now accept the post if the library was still interested. Between the time that Evans had replied and December 1952, when Williams was to begin, a charge that Williams was a Communist surfaced in an article in *Lyric*, a poetry magazine.¹³¹

At this point, a series of misunderstandings and bureaucratic flip-flopping led to Williams believing that he would be subject to a loyalty investigation before he could start the post. At one point, Luther Evans revoked Williams' invitation and then offered it again. Before the matter could be resolved, Luther Evans resigned as Librarian of Congress in July 1953 after having accepted the post of director general of UNESCO. Before Williams had a chance to serve in the post, the term of it ended. After Evans' departure from the Library of Congress, the post of Librarian of Congress remained open nearly a year, during which time the library put the matter on the backburner. A few months after the new Librarian of Congress, Quincy Mumford, assumed his position in April 1954, he went public with a letter he sent to Williams to clarify the matter. Mumford said that, contrary to what Williams was claiming, Williams' security clearance had been approved in June 1953, just a few months before Williams' term as poetry consultant was scheduled to end anyway. The library did not make another offer for a new consultancy, effectively ending the matter in a manner embarrassing for all involved.¹³²

Conclusion

Although this essay focuses on events through 1954, the pressures on libraries did not magically end as soon as Senator McCarthy was censured on December 2, 1954. A scan of *Library Literature*, the main index of articles published in the field of library and information science, indicates many other cases where library materials and librarians were attacked for alleged subversion. The censors, though, were beginning to focus more on publications that offended their moral and religious sensibilities and less on works that seemed subversive. In 1955, much attention was focused on the report “Comic Books and Juvenile Delinquency” issued by Senator Estes Kefauver’s Sub-Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. Librarians and publishers also found themselves fending off attacks from the National Office for Decent Literature, a Roman Catholic group that advocated against publications deemed offensive to religion or that were deemed obscene.¹³³

The secondary literature that examines the way that librarians responded to McCarthyism offers little in the way of documenting in detail how individual libraries responded to the threats. Wayne Wiegand’s research into how the collections at five small midwestern libraries were built is a good start in the direction of piecing together how acquisition decisions were affected by local and national pressures as well as by contemporary principles and techniques of selection. Work remains to be done, though, that will take researchers deep into the internal records of a library or library system to find more compelling evidence of how librarians faced the challenges of the day. The voices of librarians as recorded in their letters, memoirs, diaries, as well as in internal documents they composed while employed as librarians (memos, reports, and the like) have yet to be unearthed and added to the history of McCarthyism.¹³⁴

¹ Hereafter, the American Library Association will be referred to as the ALA.

² For stylistic reasons, “librarians” will be used as a generic term that does not refer to any specific group of librarians. It is also intended to cover all employees who work in a library even though, traditionally, the title “librarian” is reserved for those who have completed a specialized degree in library science (by the early 20th century, that degree had to be at the master’s or doctoral level).

³ Ruth Brown, the librarian at the public library in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, was one such casualty of political pressures: she was fired by the city in 1950 for refusing to remove contested materials. For the most complete account of her story, see Louise S. Robbins, *The Dismissal of Miss Ruth Brown: Civil Rights, Censorship, and the American Library* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).

⁴ David K. Berninghausen, *The Flight from Reason: Essays on Intellectual Freedom in the Academy, the Press, and the Library* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1975), 34.

⁵ Senator McCarthy was livid when he heard that at least one of the overseas libraries had taken a copy of Whittaker Chambers’ *Witness* off the shelves as well as books by the usual suspects (mostly those who had refused to fully cooperate with either HUAC or McCarthy’s committee, such as Howard Fast, Owen Lattimore, and Corliss Lamont) See Jay Walz, “Confusion on ‘Book Burnings’ Grows,” *New York Times*, 28 June 1953, E6.

⁶ The ALA’s Committee on Intellectual Freedom and similar committees at the state library association level repeatedly encouraged librarians to report all challenges to library materials. Many of the sources used for this study are articles from library publications reporting on specific censorship cases; news of them was passed up from the local level to the state and national level. To this day, the leading library journals have periodic articles if not regular columns noting censorship battles in libraries both big and small from around the United States.

⁷ The statistics on the number of libraries comes from *American Library Annual for 1955-1956* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1956), 63. For the history of ALA, see Dennis Thomison, *A History of the American Library Association: 1876-1972* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1978).

⁸ Benjamin Fine, “Education in Review: Library Association Asks Support for Fight Against Various Forms of Censorship,” *New York Times*, 20 June 1948, E9.

⁹ This quotation from an unnamed academic librarian was repeated in a speech given by Verner Clapp, the Chief Assistant Librarian of Congress, at the First Conference on Intellectual Freedom; see Verner Clapp, “The Large Research Library,” in *Freedom of*

Communication: Proceedings of the First Conference on Intellectual Freedom, New York City, June 28-29, 1952, ed. William Dix and Paul Bixler, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), 39.

¹⁰ For more on how large central libraries and branch libraries made selection decisions, see Ralph Munn, "The Large Public Library," in *Freedom of Communication: Proceedings of the First Conference on Intellectual Freedom, New York City, June 28-29, 1952*, ed. William Dix and Paul Bixler (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), 44-49. For small public libraries, see Jerome Cushman, "The Small Public Library," in *Freedom of Communication: Proceedings of the First Conference on Intellectual Freedom, New York City, June 28-29, 1952*, ed. William Dix and Paul Bixler (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), 50-54.

¹¹ E. W. McDiarmid, "The Library's Responsibility in Free Communication," in *Freedom of Communication: Proceedings of the First Conference on Intellectual Freedom, New York City, June 28-29, 1952*, ed. William Dix and Paul Bixler (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), 30.

¹² Dix, William, and Paul Bixler, ed., *Freedom of Communication: Proceedings of the First Conference on Intellectual Freedom, New York City, June 28-29, 1952* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), 67.

¹³ For general overviews of American anticommunism during the postwar period, see Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), Ted Morgan, *Reds: McCarthyism in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Random House, 2003), Ellen W. Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), and Ellen W. Schrecker, ed., *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History With Documents*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002).

¹⁴ John D. Paulus, "Mt. Lebanon, Pa.," *Saturday Review*, 2 July 1955, 12.

¹⁵ Paul Bixler, "Introduction," in *Freedom of Communication: Proceedings of the First Conference on Intellectual Freedom, New York City, June 28-29, 1952*, ed. William Dix and Paul Bixler (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), 2-3.

¹⁶ Louise S. Robbins, "After Brave Words, Silence: American Librarianship Responds to Cold War Loyalty Programs, 1947-1957," *Libraries & Culture* 30 (1995): 358. There is not enough evidence to say with any finality how many librarians were fired as a result of loyalty investigations. In my essay, I will cover the stories of seven who were dismissed and thirteen who resigned under pressure.

¹⁷ The difficulties involved in the importation of Soviet books and periodicals into the United States was the subject of a special conference in New York in late 1945 attended by representatives of the ALA and American libraries (such as the New York Public

Library, the Library of Congress, Brown University Library), scholarly societies (such as the Academy of Natural Sciences and the American Geographic Society of New York), and other allied organizations (American Russian Institute, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Consulate of the U.S.S.R., Institute of Pacific Relations, and more). For details on the conference, see American Russian Institute, "Special Libraries Conference on Russian Materials, November 17, 1945, New York City," (American Russian Institute, New York, 1945, photocopy). For more on Representative Velde's labeling bill, see Eli M. Oboler, "Congress as Censor," *Library Journal*, 15 November 1952, 1927-1930.

¹⁸ Ransom L. Richardson, "Washington Communiqué," *ALA Bulletin*, December 1952, 355.

¹⁹ Matthew Josephson, "The Battle of the Books," *Nation*, 28 June 1952, 620.

²⁰ Benjamin Fine, "Textbook Censors Alarm Educators," *New York Times*, 25 May 1952, 1.

²¹ "'Grapes of Wrath' Ban Ends," *Library Journal*, March 1, 1941, 210.

²² More information on Harry S Truman and the Cold War can be found in Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S Truman, 1945-1948* (New York: Norton, 1977) and Robert J. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S Truman, 1949-1953* (New York: Norton, 1982). For more on George Kennan, see David Allan Mayers, *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). The story of the Hollywood Ten is covered in Victor S. Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Viking Press, 1980).

²³ The Institute of Pacific Relations came under the scrutiny of the Tydings Committee in 1950 for harboring a Communist cell that included Owen Lattimore. See Morgan, *Reds*, 397-401, and Schrecker, *Age of McCarthyism*, 77-79. Marguerite Stewart's *Land of the Soviets* was published in 1941 as a cooperative project of the Institute of Pacific Relations and the Webster Publishing Company (St. Louis). The *Building America* series began to be published in 1934 as a monthly magazine for use by students in social studies classes. It was launched under the leadership of progressive educator, Paul Robert Hanna, who from the 1930s to the 1960s helped raise the national profile of the School of Education at Stanford University. Published by the Society for Curriculum Study and distributed by the Americana Corporation, the series was by the early 1940s being promoted by the National Education Association. In 1948, publication of the series ended. For a detailed history of the battle over the series in California, see Jared R. Stallones, *Paul Robert Hanna: A Life of Expanding Communities* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 100-111.

²⁴ Miriam Matthews, "C.L.A. and California Librarians Join Censorship Fight," *Library Journal*, 1 September 1947, 1172-1173.

²⁵ Christine Jenkins, "International Harmony: Threat or Menace? U.S. Youth Services Librarians and Cold War Censorship, 1946-1955," *Libraries & Culture* 36, no. 1 (2001), 118-119.

²⁶ Matthews, "C.L.A. and California Librarians Join Censorship Fight."

²⁷ San Bernardino County Library, *The Right to Find Out: An Analysis of the Criticisms of Building America* (San Bernardino, CA: California Library Committee on Intellectual Freedom, 1948), 2-3. For more about this pamphlet and the Committee on Intellectual Freedom's activities, see "The Status of Intellectual Freedom," *California Library Bulletin*, December 1948, 62, and Cindy Mediavilla, "The War on Books and Ideas: The California Library Association and Anti-Communist Censorship in the 1940s and 1950s," *Library Trends* 46, no. 2 (1997): 333.

²⁸ David K. Berninghausen, "Publicity Wins Intellectual Freedom," *ALA Bulletin*, February 1949, 74.

²⁹ "Two Groups Protest Ban on 'Tom Paine,'" *New York Times*, 26 February 1947, 27; "Congressional Investigations: Un-American Activities; Other Developments," *Facts On File World News Digest*, 26 October 1946, *Facts On File World News Digest @ FACTS.com*, Facts On File News Services, 25 March 2006, <http://www.2facts.com>; "Communism in the U. S.; Remington Indicted; Other Developments," *Facts On File World News Digest*, 8 June 1950, *Facts On File World News Digest @ FACTS.com*, Facts On File News Services, 25 March 2006, <http://www.2facts.com>.

³⁰ "An Appeal to Reason and Conscience: In Defense of the Right of Freedom of Inquiry in the United States," *Nation*, 16 October 1948, 419, was the reprint of petition that had been signed by 107 Americans (including former Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish, Thomas Mann, Lewis Mumford, and Eleanor Roosevelt).

³¹ State teachers colleges in Massachusetts banned the *Nation* in 1948; according to librarian David Berninghausen, the ban there was rescinded in 1949 because of "publicity" as well as "protests by the American Library Association and other organizations and individuals" (See Harold F. Brigham, "A.L.A. Protest Against New York City Ban of the *Nation*," *ALA Bulletin*, September 1948, 339, and Berninghausen, "Publicity Wins Intellectual Freedom," 74). Ruth Brown, a librarian in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, was fired in 1950 for defending her decision to keep several magazines on the shelves, including the *Nation*, considered subversive by city leaders; see Louise S. Robbins, "Racism and Censorship in Cold War Oklahoma: The Case of Ruth W. Brown and the Bartlesville Public Library," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 100, no. 1 (1996): 18-46. Los Angeles decided in 1951 to make the *Nation* and the *New Republic* only available in its school libraries to students "under teacher guidance" ("Censorship Protested," *New York Times*, 27 January 1951, 30). As an author, Paul Blanshard had more than his share of controversy. His book, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*,

also came under attack; at the Boston Public Library, a trustee of the library opposed the purchase of the book for the collections (see Emily Weston, "Boston's Battle of the Books," *Nation*, 28 June 1952, n.p. (inside front cover)).

³² Brigham, "A.L.A. Protest against New York City Ban of the *Nation*," 339. The *Nation*'s already precarious finances were further threatened by the litigation they instigated to fight the ban. For more on how the magazine dealt with their court case, see Carey McWilliams, *The Education of Carey McWilliams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 189-190.

³³ David K. Berninghausen, "The Case of the *Nation*," *American Scholar*, Winter 1949-Winter 1950, 44-45.

³⁴ Joanne E. Passet, "United States of America," in *Encyclopedia of Library History*, ed. Wayne A. Wiegand and Donald G. Davis, Jr. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 648.

³⁵ Wayne A. Wiegand, "Main Street Public Library: The Availability of Controversial Materials in the Rural Heartland, 1890-1956," *Libraries & Culture* 33, no. 1 (1998): 128, 130. Melvil Dewey (creator of the Dewey Decimal System, one of the founders of the American Library Association, co-founder of *Library Journal*, and founder of the first library school) was one of the authors of the first edition of the *ALA Catalog* published in 1904. In his study of two small public libraries in the Midwest, Wiegand finds that librarians in the Bryant Library in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, probably refrained from subscribing to the *Soviet Russia Today* because it was not indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*. According to Wiegand, a librarian could honestly believe that the reason why she declined to acquire controversial materials was not due to any political bias on her part; instead, she could tell herself that she was just following the superior judgment of librarians at the American Library Association and at H.W. Wilson and Company (publishers of the *Reader's Guide* as well as other indexes and publications for librarians) who had not listed such items in the standard selection tools.

³⁶ Berninghausen, "The Case of the *Nation*," 47-48. In 1972, David Berninghausen received a reply from the Board of Education concerning his inquiry about the current status of the *Nation* in New York City schools. The letter he got from Helen R. Sattley, the Director of School Library Service, noted that, although the superintendents rescinded the ban in 1957, the *Nation* was not actually put back on the approved list of magazines until 1963 (Berninghausen, *Flight from Reason*, 54-56).

³⁷ Louise S. Robbins, "Champions of a Cause: American Librarians and the Library Bill of Rights in the 1950s," *Library Trends* 45 (1996): 31. Details on the intellectual freedom booth at the conference can be found in David K. Berninghausen, *Flight from Reason*, 45. The coverage of the conference in major newspapers includes the following: Benjamin Fine, "Rising Censorship of Books Assailed," *New York Times*, 15 June 1948, 29; Fine, "Librarians Plan Censorship Fight," 31; "Librarians Assail Republican Chiefs," *New York*

Times, 19 June 1948, 18; Benjamin Fine, "Education in Review: Library Association Asks Support for Fight Against Various Forms of Censorship," *New York Times*, 20 June 1948, E9.

³⁸ Arthur E. Farmer, "Pressure-Group Censorship—And How to Fight It," *ALA Bulletin*, September 1948, 356-362; Robert D. Leigh, "Intellectual Freedom," *ALA Bulletin*, September 1948, 368; Pearl Buck, "World Understanding through Reading," *ALA Bulletin*, September 1948, 342.

³⁹ Brigham, "A.L.A. Protest Against New York City Ban of the *Nation*," 339.

⁴⁰ David K. Berninghausen, "The History of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, June 1953, 814.

⁴¹ Berninghausen, "The History of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee," 815; Forrest Spaulding, "Library Bill of Rights," *ALA Bulletin*, September 1952, 254.

⁴² American Library Association, "Library Bill of Rights," *ALA Bulletin*, November 1953, 485.

⁴³ This quote is cited in Robbins, "Champions of a Cause," 31.

⁴⁴ Thomison, *History of the American Library Association*, 18.

⁴⁵ "The Status of Intellectual Freedom," *California Library Bulletin*, December 1948, 65.

⁴⁶ Sigfried Edge, "Applauds New England Stand on Attempted Censorship," *Library Journal*, 1 January 1950, 4; Sara Krentzman Srygley, "Schools Under Fire," *Library Journal*, 15 December 1951, 2050. Libraries in the following cities and counties were reported to have adopted the Library Bill of Rights: Kalamazoo, Michigan; Birmingham, Alabama; Washoe County, Nevada; Des Moines, Iowa (Berninghausen, "Publicity Wins Intellectual Freedom," 74); and Worcester, Massachusetts ("Worcester Library Directors Support Their Librarian," *Library Journal*, 15 April 1949, 649). The Mountain Plains Library Association, a twelve-state consortium of library systems in the west also adopted the document (John Mackenzie Cory, "Memo to Members," *ALA Bulletin*, September 1950, 303).

⁴⁷ David K. Berninghausen, "Frontiers of Freedom," *Library Journal*, July 1951, 1072. Summaries of the discussion groups at the intellectual freedom conference can be found in Frederick J. Mosher, ed., *Freedom of Book Selection: Proceedings of the Second Conference on Intellectual Freedom, Whittier, California, June 20-21, 1953* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1954), 102-125.

⁴⁸ ALA Committee on Intellectual Freedom, "ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee Report," *ALA Bulletin*, March 1952, 84; John E. Smith and Evelyn Benagh Detchon, "It

Happened in Burbank,” *ALA Bulletin*, March 1952, 85. In 1951, members of the American Book Publishers Council, the main trade association for the book industry, quietly started plans for a “Book Publishers Bill of Rights” that would be put on display in bookstores much as the Library Bill of Rights was posted on bulletin boards in libraries. According to an article in the *Nation*, the idea was shelved in 1952 partly because publishers did not feel up to the task of defending themselves from expected attacks by super-patriot groups fired up by the publication of such a document (see Josephson, “The Battle of the Books,” 623-624).

⁴⁹ Berninghausen, “Frontiers of Freedom,” 1073.

⁵⁰ Robbins, “Racism and Censorship in Cold War Oklahoma,” 32. A longer, more complete account of the Bartlesville episode can be found in Robbins, *The Dismissal of Miss Ruth Brown: Civil Rights, Censorship, and the American Library*. Much discussed in library publications, the case also was reported on in general interest periodicals (see for example Darlene Anderson Essary, “Hush-Hush in Bartlesville,” *Saturday Review*, 30 September 1950, 24).

⁵¹ Robbins, “Racism and Censorship in Cold War Oklahoma,” 41.

⁵² David K. Berninghausen, “Los Angeles Co. Has Censorship Board,” *Library Journal*, 1 November 1948, 1545.

⁵³ “Los Angeles Supervisors Intend No County Censorship,” *Library Journal*, 1 December 1948, 1732; Berninghausen, “Publicity Wins Intellectual Freedom,” 73-74; Mediavilla, “The War on Books and Ideas,” 335-336.

⁵⁴ The Boston Public Library remains one of the biggest libraries. As of August 2005, the Boston Public Library, with nearly 15 million volumes in its collection, was listed by the ALA as being the third largest in America, behind the Library of Congress, with 30 million volumes, and Harvard University, with over 15 million (American Library Association, “The Nation's Largest Libraries: A Listing By Volumes Held, ALA Library Fact Sheet Number 22,” *American Library Association*, <http://www.ala.org/ala/alalibrary/libraryfactsheet/alalibraryfactsheet22.htm>). For this account of the Boston Public Library’s battle with the Boston *Post*, the following were especially useful: “Boston Board Keeps Red Books in Library,” *New York Times*, 4 October 1952, 24; Laurence J. Kipp, “Boston-The Library Did Not Burn,” *The New Republic*, 29 June 1953, 15-16; Laurence J. Kipp, “Report from Boston,” *Library Journal*, 1 November 1952, 1843-1846; Laurence J. Kipp, “Boston, Mass,” *Saturday Review*, 2 July 1955, 13, 36; and Weston, “Boston's Battle of the Books,” n.p. (inside front cover). It is notable that the Boston Public Library story was covered not only in local newspapers but also in publications national in scope (*New Republic* and *Saturday Review*).

⁵⁵ The opinion of former FBI agent Herbert Philbrick that the research collections of the Boston Public Library should include Soviet materials was echoed in 1955 when a group of his fellow agents from the FBI proposed opening a library in Washington, DC, that would be entirely devoted to providing “information on alleged subversive organizations and individuals.” It is not clear if this project ever got past the planning stage (see “Library to House Subversive Data,” *New York Times*, 13 May 1955, 12).

⁵⁶ David K. Berninghausen, “Film Censorship,” *ALA Bulletin*, December 1950, 448. All details of the Peoria Public Library case come from Berninghausen’s article and Robbins, “Champions of a Cause,” 35. Berninghausen also noted that *Brotherhood of Man* was “based on *The Races of Mankind*, a Public Affairs Pamphlet by Dr. Ruth Benedict and Dr. Gene Weltfish.” Weltfish, a professor of anthropology at Columbia University, had been monitored by the FBI and anticommunist groups for a number of years prior to the film controversy in Peoria. In 1952, she came under fire for contending that the United States had engaged in germ warfare in the Korean War. In 1953, when asked by Senate investigators whether she was a Communist, she used the Fifth Amendment to defend her unwillingness to answer the question; later that year, she was forced out of her position at Columbia when the college declined to renew her contract (for more details, see Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 255-257).

⁵⁷ Berninghausen, “Film Censorship,” 447.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Robbins, “Champions of a Cause,” 35.

⁵⁹ “News Roundup—1951 Midwinter Meeting,” *ALA Bulletin*, March 1951, 94; Robbins, “Champions of a Cause,” 35.

⁶⁰ In 1970, the American Book Publishers Council merged with the American Educational Publishers Institute to form the Association of American Publishers, which became and continues to be the main trade association for the book publishing industry. The details on the number of libraries under fire in 1953 come from Everett T. Moore, “Intellectual Freedom,” in *Research Librarianship: Essays in Honor of Robert B. Downs*, ed. Jerrold Orne (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1971), 7. Moore’s essay also contains a useful account of the story of the overseas libraries. For a detailed account of the Freedom to Read statement’s creation, see Louise S. Robbins, “The Overseas Libraries Controversy and the Freedom to Read: U.S. Librarians and Publishers Confront Joseph McCarthy,” *Libraries & Culture* 36, no. 1 (2001): 27-39.

⁶¹ Pamela Spence Richards, “United States Information Agency Libraries,” in *Encyclopedia of Library History*, ed. Wayne A. Wiegand, and Donald G. Davis (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 641.

⁶² Robbins, “The Overseas Library Controversy,” 28.

⁶³ “ALA Defends U.S. Libraries Abroad,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 4 July 1953, 20.

⁶⁴ C.P. Trussell, “Voice Must Drop Works of Leftists,” *New York Times*, 20 February 1953, 9.

⁶⁵ Among the authors whose books were targeted by McCarthy’s committee were Dashiell Hammet, author of *The Thin Man*; Owen Lattimore, a scholar of Asian history from Johns Hopkins University who wrote *Ordeal by Slander*, an account of his earlier tangles with McCarthy; Earl Browder, the former leader of the American Communist Party; William Z. Foster, the current leader of the American Communist Party (“McCarthy Probes Overseas Libraries,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 4 April 1953, 1515-1516) and Morris Schappes, a City College professor who was fired in 1941 for his political affiliations (“U.S. Library Found Popular in Israel,” *New York Times*, 5 April 1953, 29.) For more on Gene Weltfish’s testimony, see “Replies Refused by Dr. Weltfish,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1953, 16.

⁶⁶ As Ted Morgan notes, “this classified directive was leaked to McCarthy, who smelled blood and launched his investigations” into the overseas libraries in February 1953 (Morgan, *Reds*, 436). For more on the directives, see “Government Clarifies Policy of Book and Library Program,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 18 July 1953, 184-187; “Library Directive Issued; Johnson Hits McCarthy Aide,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 25 July 1953, 374-375; Scrutineer, “Secret Blacklist: Untold Story of the U.S.I.A.,” *Nation*, 30 October 1954, 376-379. Robbins, “The Overseas Library Controversy,” 29.

⁶⁷ Morgan, *Reds*, 444. Robbins, “The Overseas Library Controversy,” 29.

⁶⁸ “The Texts of Eisenhower Speeches at Dartmouth and Oyster Bay,” *New York Times*, 15 June 1953, 10.

⁶⁹ Robbins, “The Overseas Libraries Controversy,” 31. To see what Eisenhower actually said later when he was backing away from the popular interpretation of his Dartmouth speech, see “Transcript of the President’s News Conference Amplifying His Speech at Dartmouth,” *New York Times*, 18 June 1953, 18.

⁷⁰ C.P. Trussell, “Some Books Literally Burned After Inquiry, Dulles Reports,” *New York Times*, 16 June 1953, 1; “Books Burned in Oklahoma Town As Not Fit for High School Library,” *New York Times*, 12 February 1952, 29; “On Burning Books,” *New York Times*, 13 February 1952, 28. In April 12, 1953, a mob in Chicago set on fire a number of books on display at a meeting of the Chicago Council of American-Soviet Friendship. Among the torched books were ones by Corliss Lamont (see “Lamont Asks Inquiry on Burning,” *New York Times*, 30 April 1953, 40 and “Protest Book Burning by Anti-Red Group,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 20 June 1953, 2577). Lamont, a lecturer in philosophy at Columbia University, had been under the scrutiny of the professional anticommunists since the 1920s, when as a Harvard professor he tried to get as speakers at Harvard’s Liberal Club Eugene Debs, William Z. Foster, and Scott Nearing, a professor who had been ousted

from his position at the University of Pennsylvania because of his outspoken commitment to radical politics (see Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower*, 27). The San Antonio incident was covered by the *New York Times* (“Branding of Books Stirs Texas Battle,” *New York Times*, 7 June 1953, 61; “Books in San Antonio,” *New York Times*, 8 June 1953, 28; Stanley Walker, “‘Book Branding’--A Case History,” *New York Times*, 12 July 1953, p.SM11.) and by library and the book industry publications (Marie Halpenny, “Books on Trial in Texas,” *Library Journal*, July 1953, 1179-1184; “Further Censorship Efforts Reported from Many Localities,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 30 May 1953). Several magazines devoted a special issue to the subject of library censorship and included sections on the San Antonio incident (Maury Maverick, “San Antonio--More Fire Fighters Than Fire,” *New Republic*, 29 June 1953, 12-13; Tomme C. Call, “San Antonio, Texas,” *Saturday Review*, 2 July 1955, 11-12).

⁷¹ Richard Armour, “How to Burn a Book,” *California Librarian*, December 1953, 98.

⁷² Trussell, “Some Books Literally Burned,” *New York Times*, 1; “Book Burning Denied,” *New York Times*, 17 June 1953, 16; “Clarification of Report on Book Burning Sought,” *New York Times*, 18 June 1953, 20; William J. Jorden, “Many Burned in Japan,” *New York Times*, 22 June 1953, 8; Milton Bracker, “Books of 40 Authors Banned by U.S. in Overseas Libraries,” *New York Times*, 22 June 1953, 1+; Jay Walz, “Confusion on ‘Book Burning’ Grows,” *New York Times*, 28 June 1953, E6. For an example of librarians using the phrase “book burning” or “book burners” see Kipp, “Boston--The Library Did Not Burn,” 15-16. It is worth noting that in an April 29, 1953, address on the CBS radio network, journalist Edward R. Murrow, referred to Nazi book burnings as he criticized American efforts to purge overseas libraries of books (see “Murrow on the Fight for Right to Read,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 16 May 1953, 2017).

⁷³ Robbins, “Champions of a Cause,” 39. The quote by Dan Lacy appears in Robbins, “The Overseas Libraries Controversy,” 30.

⁷⁴ The objectives of the conference are reprinted in Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association, *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, 5th ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1996), 134. A complete list of attendees can be found in “Publishers’ Council and ALA Adopt Declaration, ‘The Freedom to Read,’” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 4 July 1953, 19.

⁷⁵ Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association, *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, 135; Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, “The Freedom to Read,” *ALA Bulletin*, November 1953, 481.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 482-483.

⁷⁷ Robbins, “The Overseas Libraries Controversy,” 33.

⁷⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower, "The President's Letter on Intellectual Freedom," *ALA Bulletin*, November 1953, 484.

⁷⁹ Robbins, "The Overseas Libraries Controversy," 34.

⁸⁰ The editorial praising ALA's efforts is "Freedom to Read," *New York Times*, 27 June 1953, 14. For other coverage by the *New York Times* of the ALA preconference and the main conference, see "Librarians in Convention," 22 June 1953, 20; "Book Group's Head Hits Censor Moves," 22 June 1953, 10; Gladwin Hill, "Librarian Opposes Controls on Ideas," 23 June 1953, 18; Gladwin Hill, "State Department Scored--Publishers Council Joins in Manifesto," 26 June 1953, 1+; Gladwin Hill, "Eisenhower Assails 'Zealots' and Backs Freedom of Ideas," 27 June 1953, 1+.

⁸¹ American Library Association, "Overseas Library Statement," *ALA Bulletin*, November 1953, 487; "News and Trends of the Week," *Publishers' Weekly*, 11 July 1953, 107.

⁸² Meredith Bloss, "Check for Action," *ALA Bulletin*, November 1953, 464.

⁸³ Paul Bixler, "The Librarian—Bureaucrat or Democrat," *Library Journal*, 1 December 1954, 2278; Jean Preer, "The American Heritage Project: Librarians and the Democratic Tradition in the Early Cold War," *Libraries & Culture* 28, no. 2 (1993): 167.

⁸⁴ William S. Dix, "Intellectual Freedom," *Library Trends*, January 1955, 303-304; "Gallup Poll on Book Banning," *Publishers' Weekly*, 8 August 1953, 564-565. Of course, a Gallup Poll of limited number of persons listed in *Who's Who* does not offer many clues to the opinions of a wider swath of Americans.

⁸⁵ As quoted in Robbins, "Champions of a Cause," 42.

⁸⁶ Bixler, "The Librarian—Bureaucrat or Democrat," 2278.

⁸⁷ "'Purged' Books Still off Overseas Libraries Shelves," *Publishers' Weekly*, 7 November 1953, 1933; Jay Walz, "Report Criticizes Inquiries Abroad," *New York Times*, 4 February 1954, 11; Robbins, "The Overseas Library Controversy," 35.

⁸⁸ Helen E. Haines, "Balancing the Books: Reason Enthroned," *Library Journal*, 1 February 1948, 153. *Living with Books: the Art of Book Selection* was first published in 1935. A second edition came out in 1950 and featured a new section on political censorship. Haines notes the "renewed strength" of political censorship that was "strengthened by a deepening hostility to Soviet Russia" and that "rose in the late 1940's to a nation-wide hysteria." She adds that "in spite of protest and resistant action by writers, publishers, teachers, scientists, librarians, many leaders in social and political thought, and a minority of newspapers, sanity and fair dealing seemed in eclipse." For more on Haines' thoughts on political censorship and library acquisitions, see Helen E.

Haines, *Living with Books: The Art of Book Selection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 187-188.

⁸⁹ “The Attack on Books in Libraries,” *Wilson Library Bulletin*, June 1953, 811.

⁹⁰ Luther Evans, “The Problem of Censorship in Public Libraries,” *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, 2 June 1952, 21-22.

⁹¹ Leigh, “Intellectual Freedom,” 368.

⁹² “Librarians Confer on Censor Threat,” *New York Times*, 29 June 1952, 23.

⁹³ Fine, “Textbook Censors Alarm Educators,” 1. In July 1955, the ALA approved a School Library Bill of Rights to address the special concerns of freedom in library acquisitions in educational settings.

⁹⁴ Some evidence about the self-censorship practices of librarians can be found in a study published in 1959, tantalizingly close but just beyond the era focused on in my essay. Between 1956 and 1958, Marjorie Fiske interviewed 156 librarians and forty-eight school administrators from twenty-six communities in California. Of the librarians, one-third worked for municipal libraries, one-third for county libraries, and one-third for school libraries. When asked about how they responded to acquiring controversial material, eighteen percent said they habitually avoided it and forty-one percent said they sometimes avoided it; in other words, close to sixty percent of the librarians admitted that at some point they did not purchase a book because it was controversial. Fiske’s findings seem to contradict the perception one gets from reading library publications in the late 1940s and early 1950s, in which articles regularly featured examples of librarians standing up to pressure groups in both winning and losing battles. For more on Fiske’s findings, see Marjorie Fiske, *Book Selection and Censorship: A Study of School and Public Libraries in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959). Library historian, Wayne Wiegand, has been conducting research into midwestern libraries that yields evidence of librarians’ acquisition habits during the McCarthy era. He has begun to build a database of all the books purchased for five small libraries in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Wiegand has been fortunate enough to locate complete runs of accession books for these libraries from the 1880s through the early 1950s; these books contain careful notations by librarians of the date each item was bought for the library. With his database containing all the information gleaned from the accession books, Wiegand is able to analyze the growth of subject areas in collections, as well as the presence or absence of controversial works. For more on the process of building this database, see Wiegand, “Main Street Public Library.” For an example of the kind of historical insights that Wiegand has been able to mine from the database, see Wayne Wiegand, “Collecting Contested Titles: The Experience of Five Small Public Libraries in the Rural Midwest, 1893-1956,” *Libraries & Culture* 40, no. 3 (2005): 368-84.

⁹⁵ Jenkins, “International Harmony,” 124.

⁹⁶ ALA Committee on Intellectual Freedom, "Labeling--A Report of the ALA Committee on Intellectual Freedom," *ALA Bulletin*, July 1951-31 August 1951, 241.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid. Although the report by the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom on the labeling controversy did not clearly state it, it is likely that the librarians contacted were in positions of authority at the libraries where they worked. As the ALA considered the Montclair labeling proposal, another labeling controversy arose in Los Angeles. The *Nation* and the *New Republic* magazines were taken out of the open stacks in school libraries and put in a "'reserved' category" that also included "sex books." Items in this category could only be used by students "under teacher guidance" (see "'Censorship' Protested," 30). In the public library in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, those same two magazines, whose inclusion in the collection had been defended by librarian Ruth Brown at the price of her job, were first removed from the open shelves then later returned as reserve items that required the patron to ask for them (see Oklahoma Library Association Committee on Intellectual Freedom, "Censorship in Bartlesville," *ALA Bulletin*, March 1951, 88). Although both the Los Angeles school libraries and the Bartlesville Public Library did not actually stamp or label the books, by segregating them to reserve collections, the libraries in effect labeled the materials as a danger to readers.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ ALA Committee on Intellectual Freedom, "Labeling," 242.

¹⁰¹ Emerson Greenaway, "Books—Democratic Defense," *Library Journal*, 1 September 1954, 1438-1439.

¹⁰² "Librarians Confer on Censor Threat," 23.

¹⁰³ ALA Committee on Intellectual Freedom, "Book Selection Principles," *ALA Bulletin*, November 1951, 346-347. Ulveling's speech at the ALA conference on July 13, 1951, was actually an abbreviated version of a speech he had given two weeks earlier at the University of Illinois at a conference titled, "Public Library in This Time of Crisis." For the full text of the original speech, see Ralph A. Ulveling, "Book Selection Policies," *Library Journal*, August 1951, 1170-1171.

¹⁰⁴ ALA Committee on Intellectual Freedom, "Book Selection Principles," 350; Smith and Detchon, "It Happened in Burbank." 85.

¹⁰⁵ Ralph A. Ulveling, "A Reply to the CIF Committee," *ALA Bulletin*, March 1952, 75.

¹⁰⁶ In Marjorie Fiske's study of librarians, which was conducted between 1956 and 1958, it was noted that one librarian interviewed "finds the gift stamp a useful device for all

controversial publications, donated or not.” The stamp indicated that the book was donated to the library. If a stamped book was challenged by someone outside the library, the librarian would be able to deflect some of the controversy by pretending that it was not the library that purchased it (Fiske, *Book Selection and Censorship*, 47). The details on labeling policies at Catholic university libraries is from “Poll of Libraries Shows Free Choice,” *New York Times*, 16 June 1953, 22. It is worth noting that all three of the Catholic university libraries mentioned in this article were Jesuit schools. Given the prominent role played by the church in anticommunism activities, further investigation of library procedures in Catholic universities in the McCarthy era is warranted. Such a study should examine the role played by the Catholic Library Association, which was founded in 1921 and has published a quarterly journal, *Catholic Library World*, since 1929. A search in *Library Literature*, the premier database indexing the literature of library and information science, reveals that since 1984, only seventeen articles have been published under the subject heading “College and university libraries (Catholic),” none of which seem to address specifically the subject of anticommunism in libraries at Catholic universities. Further digging into the print version of the *Library Literature* index—especially the volumes covering the 1940s and 1950s—may lead to articles in *Catholic Library World* and other library publications in which librarians discussed the measures they were taking to address the issue of allegedly subversive books in library collections.

¹⁰⁷ “Alabama Adopts Anti-Red Textbook Act,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 12 December 1953, 2313; Bixler, “Librarian—Bureaucrat or Democrat,” 2276.

¹⁰⁸ Walker, “‘Book Branding’—A Case History,” SM12.

¹⁰⁹ Call, “San Antonio,” 12.

¹¹⁰ “Encore,” *New Republic*, 6 January 1947, 9. Louise S. Robbins, “The Library of Congress and Federal Loyalty Programs, 1947-1956: No ‘Communists or Cocksuckers,’” *Library Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (1994): 367. Many of the details in the following discussion of loyalty programs come from this article by Robbins as well her article “After Brave Words, Silence: American Librarianship Responds to Cold War Loyalty Programs, 1947-1957,” *Libraries & Culture* 30 (1995): 345-65.

¹¹¹ Robbins, “The Library of Congress,” 366-367.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 370-371

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 376.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 377.

¹¹⁵ Meyer Rosen, “Pacific States: Los Angeles Loyalty Survey Is Under Challenge,” *New York Times*, 19 October 1947, E8; Edwin N. Hughes and John E. Smith, “Loyalty at the Los Angeles County Library,” *California Librarian*, December 1950, 106.

¹¹⁶ “Southern California L.A. Protests Censorship, Loyalty Checks,” *Library Journal*, 15 May 1948, 792.

¹¹⁷ Hughes and Smith, “Loyalty at the Los Angeles County Library,” 107.

¹¹⁸ Robbins, “The Library of Congress,” 349.

¹¹⁹ For examples of articles debating different versions of the loyalty program resolution, see David K. Berninghausen, “Loyalty by Choice or Coercion,” *ALA Bulletin*, January 1950, 16-17; Edge, “Applauds New England Stand,” 62; “It Is the Loyalty Oaths That Are Subversive,” *Library Journal*, 15 January 1950, 82; “Loyalty Investigations,” *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, 27 March 1950, 23-24; “Let's Check on 'Acts'...But Not Opinions,” *Library Journal*, 15 April 1950, 679, 681; Verner W. Clapp, “Disloyalty by Imputation or Due Process,” *Library Journal*, 15 April 1950, 678, 680; O. W. Holloway, “‘Bull by the Tail...’,” *Library Journal*, 15 April 1950, 679, 681; and David K. Berninghausen, “The Responsibilities of Librarians,” *ALA Bulletin*, September 1950, 305-306. The full text of the final version of the resolution as approved in July 1950 can be found in “Resolution on Loyalty Programs,” *ALA Bulletin*, September 1950, 306.

¹²⁰ Berninghausen, “Loyalty by Choice or Coercion,” 16.

¹²¹ Robbins, “After Brave Words, Silence,” 361.

¹²² “Margolis Action Put Off,” *New York Times*, 17 February 1948, 22; “Margolis Is Dismissed,” *New York Times*, 19 October 1948, 20.

¹²³ “Red Charge Denied by Public Library,” *New York Times*, 21 September 1949, 20; Ellen W. Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 44.

¹²⁴ For contemporary coverage of the case of Elizabeth Haas, see “Librarians Assail Loyalty Inquiries,” *New York Times*, 22 July 1950, 15, and Berninghausen, “The Responsibility of Librarians,” 305-306. For a more complete account, see Robbins, “After Brave Words, Silence,” 353-354.

¹²⁵ Robbins, “After Brave Words, Silence,” 357-358, 364n.

¹²⁶ “Librarian Acquitted of Perjury Charge,” *Library Journal*, 15 April 1955, 851.

¹²⁷ Robbins, “After Brave Words, Silence,” 358.

¹²⁸ “Smith, Labor Board Ex-Member Refuses to Say If He Was a Red,” *New York Times*, 22 May 1953, 61; “Upholding of Librarian's Rights Wins \$5,000 for Quaker Village,” *New York Times*, 23 June 1955, 31.

¹²⁹ “Upholding of Librarian’s Rights,” 31. See also “The Recalcitrant Librarian,” *Time*, 21 January 1957, 50.

¹³⁰ “2 Win and 6 Lose Contempt Pleas,” *New York Times*, 19 June 1960, 27.

¹³¹ The account of William Carlos Williams draws mainly on the version provided in Reed Whittemore, *William Carlos Williams: Poet From Jersey* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), 306-314.

¹³² Whittemore, *William Carlos Williams*, 314.

¹³³ For an example of articles on comic books and censorship, see Grace W. Gilman, “Bread or Stones?” *ALA Bulletin*, January 1956, 17-18. For articles on the National Office for Decent Literature, see for example Roger H. Smith, “NODL: Does It Recognize Its Responsibility,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, 20 May 1957, 32.

¹³⁴ Wiegand, “Main Street Public Library;” Wiegand, “Collecting Contested Titles.”