

Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Oboler, Eli M. *Defending Intellectual Freedom*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980. 246p. \$22.95. ISBN 0-313-21472-7.

"**Censorship in the Eighties**," *Drexel Library Quarterly*, Winter 1982. V.18. 108p. Philadelphia: Drexel Univ. \$6.

During the past several years, censorship of books, periodicals, films, library-initiated programs, and the restrictive use of library meeting rooms has resurfaced, plaguing not only our schools and libraries but undermining First Amendment freedoms. The act of censorship is a complex issue. The creation of balanced collections, reflecting the cultural diversity and opinions within our society, is not an easy task for collection development librarians. Typical targets of censorship are materials dealing with violence, sex, non-traditional values, religious views, or moral issues, while others target what they perceive as racial or sexual stereotyping. The two volumes reviewed represent fairly traditional compendiums as they approach the problems and causes of censorship, although their styles vary considerably. With intellectual freedom and access to information ranking as two of ALA's top priorities for the 1980s, a careful review of *Defending Intellectual Freedom* and "Censorship in the Eighties" seems most appropriate.

Eli Oboler, an academic librarian, and for many the "Dean" of intellectual freedom, chose to reprint a number of his previously published articles, speeches, book reviews, and letters to editors. Many of these are more than ten years old. This approach, while allowing the reader to become familiar with Oboler's philosophy on intellectual freedom—that there "is no

censorship fight that is someone else's"—lacks immediacy and tends to represent a rehashing of "Obolerisms" that are available in many other sources. Phrases such as "a frustratingly sisyphian progress," "enough of logomachy," and "pronunciamentos" are typical examples. His chapters on the "Etiology of Censorship" and "Public Relations and Fighting Censorship" represent good treatment of their subjects. His discussion of the word and his practical suggestions for creating viable library public relations programs defending intellectual freedom issues are well stated. However, other chapters, such as the one dealing with young adults, seem antiquated in view of the recent changes in the *ALA Library Bill of Rights* and its several interpretations dealing with YA issues. Much has changed since 1967. His chapter "Recent Censorship Literature" is hardly recent, and the reader quickly loses interest in the following chapter as the author jumps from one letter to the editor to another, and never reprints the letters. Articles dealing with specific laws in Idaho, or an intellectual freedom conference held nearly twenty years ago, lose their relevance when considering today's issues. Even though Oboler chooses this rather dogmatic format for his theories, his message remains important, if the reader can wade through the rest. To summarize his philosophy, I quote: "But somewhere, sometime, in each of our careers, we must come down from our ivory towers, out from behind the rows of stacks, perhaps blinking and befuddled by the shining light of immediacy, but ready to 'fight the unbeatable foe.' And we can have no bet-

ter fighting equipment than a thorough knowledge of the history and the reasons for the defense of freedom of the mind, and equally full knowledge of the dark purposes and deleterious activities which make up the history of censorship through the ages" (p.104). Purchase of this volume is recommended for library science collections and academic libraries wishing Oboler articles.

"Censorship in the Eighties," *Drexel Library Quarterly*, should be purchased by academic libraries. The articles address a variety of current issues that affect our freedom to read, even though they are fairly traditional in their approach. Busha's introduction paints a broad picture of intellectual freedom issues (most of it said before) and successfully encapsulates the essence of the articles that follow. Busha blames the New Right for most of the recent problems, while overlooking a growing tendency by the Left to reject media perceived as racially or sexually stereotyped. Many of the articles focus on the Moral Majority's role in the suppression of our right to read. Murray and Wood's article discusses the New Christian Right and its relationship to what the authors feel is an inhibition that has been inflicted upon our freedom of expression. By summarizing agendas, methods, groups, and programs, the authors attempt to evaluate and relate the New Christian Right to current censorship activities. Schuman continues by focusing on the Moral Majority and what he perceives as politically motivated censorship. His thesis is that Moral Majority tactics obstruct the ability of public institutions to facilitate the right of free inquiry and, more specifically, the right to read. Serebnick's article looks at censorship surveys that have been used and comes to the conclusion that improvements need to be made and more attention paid to the conceptualization of the checklist survey and how it is constructed and used in censorship research. Berninghausen's rather scholarly approach to the history and theory behind intellectual freedom contrasts the policies and practices that have developed in our public libraries with library operations in authoritarian countries. He briefly

touches upon the censorship activities of groups such as the Council on Interracial Books for Children. However, his statements on ALA documents are traditional and outdated and can be found elsewhere. Eleanore Richardson lays some theoretical groundwork for the upsurge of textbook censorship and explains why many people feel that this is one of the few places they can exert local control over the lives of their children. She pinpoints objectionable material found in recent textbooks and mentions several states that have applied pressure on textbook publishers. Oboler briefly summarizes how intellectual freedom is viewed internationally. The issue concludes with yet another bibliography that lists already well known sources, most of which were published in the 1970s.—Susan L. Heath, *Nicolet College, Rhinelander, Wisconsin.*

Archival Forms Manual. Comp. by the Society of American Archivists. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1982. 145p. \$7 to members, \$10 to others. LC 82-61142. ISBN 0-931828-53-8.

Archives & Manuscripts: Reprography. By Carolyn Hoover Sung. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1982. Basic Manual series. 68p. \$5 members/\$7 others. LC 82-50454. ISBN 0-931828-51-1.

Evaluation of Archival Institutions. Comp. by Report of the Task Force on Institutional Evaluation. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1982. 43p. \$4 members/\$5 others. ISBN 0-931828-55-4.

Here are three publications from the Society of American Archivists (SAA). The first was compiled by the SAA Forms Manual Task Force, with Patrick M. Quinn of Northwestern University as chair. In 1973 the SAA's College and University Archives Committee compiled a *Forms Manual* designed to be used by college and university archivists. Accordingly, this *Manual* reproduces forms dealing with (1) appraisal and disposition, (2) accessioning, (3) arrangement and description, (4) use, and (5) specialized items such as loan agreements, oral history, solicitation, and conservation. The forms come from many divergent institutions: