

Summer 1986

The Social Responsibility Movement Among Law Librarians: The Debate Revisited

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Mr. Torres reviews the major social responsibility movements within the public library and law library communities from the early 1900s to the 1970s, with special emphasis on the development of the law library movement in the early 1970s.

I. Introduction

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a time when many aspects of American society were being questioned, the library community began to examine the traditional roles and functions of the library in society.¹ It was from this questioning attitude in librarianship generally that the law library's social responsibility movement emerged. This article examines the social responsibility movement among librarians² and debates that helped mold the law library movement.³ Understanding the background can provide a clearer understanding of the movement's ramifications on today's law librarian.⁴

* © Arturo L. Torres, 1986. This is an edited version of a paper presented at the 78th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries, New York, New York, July 9, 1985. It is one of the winning entries in the 1985 "Call for Papers" competition for newer law librarians.

** Reference Librarian, University of Arizona, College of Law Library, Tucson, Arizona. The author wishes to thank Trish Misaghi for her constructive comments throughout the preparation of this article, Vanessa D. Guess for her time and patience in typing the manuscript, and Ronald L. Cherry, Carol Elliott, Edward H. White III, Francisco Avalos, and my colleagues in the law library, whose comments and observations during the preparation of this article were indispensable.

1. Public libraries make up the largest segment of the library profession, and most of the literature regarding social responsibility and libraries is from the perspective of public librarians. Other types of libraries and librarians were involved in the social responsibility debate and activities as well. See, e.g., *Cornell Librarians Condemn War*, 97 LIBR. J. 2325 (1972); *Harvard Library Staff Protests Vietnam Escalation*, 97 LIBR. J. at 2326 (1972); *Northwestern Librarians Protest the War*, 97 LIBR. J. 2680 (1972); Meyer, *Light My Fire*, 62 SPECIAL LIBR. 100 (1971).

2. See Curley, *Social Responsibility and Libraries*, in 4 ADVANCES IN LIBRARIANSHIP 77, 78-80 (1974). Social responsibility as it affects librarians has been an elusive concept to define. In this article social responsibility is defined as action that questions the status quo by taking partisan positions on social issues. A social issue in its most simplified form has been defined as "one which deals with an aspect of society." See *When is a Social Issue a Library Issue? A Symposium*, 45 WILSON LIBR. BULL. 42, 53 (1970) (comments by BIRTHA) (hereinafter cited as *Symposium*).

3. The debate and activities of the law library profession were identified exclusively through reviews of the *Law Library Journal* and the *AALL Newsletter*. The debate and activities of local AALL chapters and individuals are not included in this discussion.

4. This article assumes that social responsibility is now an accepted component of the library profession, including law librarianship.

II. The Public Library Movement

A. Early Developments

The individual and collective efforts of socially active librarians throughout this century helped shape the social responsibility movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁵ From its inception, the library profession was entwined in social issues.⁶ Shera notes that the social responsibility movement can be traced back to the public library's promotion of reading, which was designed primarily to save or at least raise mankind from poverty, crime, vice, alcoholism, and other social evils.⁷ Clearly, this was the general intent in the late nineteenth century, when librarians were contending that one of the library's special roles in society was to assist in the alleviation of amoral conduct.⁸

This role was aided by the financing of reading rooms specifically designed to rehabilitate the "dangerous classes."⁹ It was hoped that by providing services to the poor, reading rooms would be alternatives to saloons and other places of ill-repute.¹⁰

Some have characterized these early activities as nothing more than missionary zeal on the part of librarians¹¹ who were more concerned with religious tenets than with social issues.¹² Others have argued that social concerns voiced by librarians at this time were merely a ploy to procure tax revenues.¹³ Still others considered this social fervor as a means for justifying and affirming the librarians' own profession.¹⁴ The actual motivations of socially active

5. Curley, *supra* note 2, at 81-82.

6. See generally D. GARRISON, *APOSTLES OF CULTURE: THE PUBLIC LIBRARIAN AND AMERICAN SOCIETY, 1876-1920* (1979); Ditzion, *Social Reform, Education, and the Library, 1850-1900*, 9 LIBR. Q. 156 (1939); J. SHERA, *THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION FOR LIBRARIANSHIP* (1972).

7. J. SHERA, *supra* note 6, at 295.

8. The library was expected to (1) keep people away from "cheap and harmful forms of entertainment," such as drinking; (2) prevent crimes and rehabilitate the criminal and delinquent; (3) serve as a form of relaxation and recreation for the working class; and (4) provide reading materials to the poor. Ditzion, *supra* note 6, at 160-61.

9. *Id.* at 161 (quoting C. BRACE, *THE DANGEROUS CLASSES OF NEW YORK AND TWENTY YEARS' WORK AMONG THEM* 266 (1872)). According to Ditzion, the first concerted efforts to provide books and reading rooms for the underprivileged classes took place in New York City during the pre-Civil War depression. *Id.*

10. D. GARRISON, *supra* note 6, at 36.

11. Garrison claims that many of the early librarians had been closely aligned with the Church. It is no surprise, therefore, that these early librarians regarded the mission of the library, to a large degree, as the keeper and shaper of public morality. See *id.* at 38, 63.

12. See *id.* at 40.

13. Ditzion notes that this "appeal to humane instincts" has been an effective means for reaching taxpayer's pockets. Ditzion, *supra* note 6, at 166.

14. See, e.g., *id.* at 165; D. GARRISON, *supra* note 6, at 38.

librarians during this time may be questioned, but the sincerity of their actions seems to have been genuine.¹⁵

Three-quarters of a century later, another large-scale discussion on this topic took place. The political and sociological climate of the Coolidge era¹⁶ gave rise, in part, to the "Young Turks," a group of young librarians who called for librarians to be socially active.¹⁷ Their sincerity and intentions have been questioned, however;¹⁸ Shera maintains that the Young Turks' objectives did not imply a social consciousness, but instead focused around the unresponsiveness of the internal hierarchy of the American Library Association.¹⁹

Unquestionably, however, there were individuals as well as small groups of librarians who were genuinely concerned with social issues during the 1930s and 1940s.²⁰ Some were never organized formally;²¹ others were organized for only a brief time. One such group was the Progressive Librarians' Council (PLC). Like the Young Turks, one of its principal aims was to bring about a more democratic and responsive internal structure of the ALA.²² But unlike some of its predecessors and contemporaries, the PLC was equally concerned with censorship and civil liberty issues. During its short existence, the PLC was able to support and sponsor several progressive resolutions before the ALA membership.²³ However, strong opposition from

15. Ditzion writes:

However suspicious or callous one is in his examination of the humanitarian spirit of library committees, trustees, and librarians, he will in the end concede the genuineness and sincerity of missionary zeal among these groups. Moreover, even if one attributes this moral fervor in part to a desire for professional aggrandizement, there still remains as valid evidence that major portion of it which either arises from true sentiment or reflects a current desire or emotion of the general public.

Ditzion, *supra* note 6, at 165. See also D. GARRISON, *supra* note 6, at 42; Curley, *supra* note 2, at 81.

16. Jesse Shera has summarized some of the social concerns of librarians in the late twenties as calling for greater sexual freedom and relaxation of morals, rejecting censorship, questioning religion, scorning the establishment, distrusting the military, fearing dehumanization of jobs, and questioning capitalism. See Shera, *Plus ça Change*, 95 LIBR. J. 979, 980 (1970).

17. *Id.* at 982.

18. See *id.* at 983.

19. *Id.* at 982-83. The group's program objectives contain many self-serving statements, forcing Shera to conclude that what they really wanted was the means to "increase upward mobility and earning power." *Id.* at 983.

20. Vigorous debate began to appear periodically in the library literature during this period. See, e.g., Berelson, *The Myth of Library Impartiality: An Interpretation for Democracy*, 13 WILSON BULL. FOR LIBR. 87 (1938) (arguing that librarians have a social responsibility to be partial). But see Fry, *Implications for Library Impartiality*, 14 WILSON LIBR. BULL. 52 (1939) (arguing against the principle of partiality). Shera notes that the library press played an active role in promoting the social responsibility debate by consistently publishing articles on that subject. Shera, *supra* note 16, at 983. For a thorough discussion of the relationship of social responsibility and the library press, see Eshelman, *Social Responsibility and the Library Press*, 46 WILSON LIBR. BULL. 804 (1972).

21. The League for Liberal Librarians, proposed by Stanley Kunitz, editor of the *Wilson Bulletin for Librarians*, "never got off the pages" of the *Bulletin*. J. SHERA, *supra* note 6, at 297.

22. See Kraus, *The Progressive Librarians' Council*, 97 LIBR. J. 2351, 2351 (1972).

23. *Id.* at 2353. In 1941 the PLC sponsored and obtained ALA endorsement on the following resolutions: a call for boycotting hotels that practiced racial discrimination, reaffirmation of the Library Bill of Rights, a request for a PLC Civil Rights Committee to defer attacks on library workers by in-

the ALA establishment²⁴ and the start of World War II²⁵ worked against the PLC, and by 1942 the organization was faltering. The last *P.L.C. Bulletin* was printed in June 1944.²⁶

Generally, the early social responsibility movements among librarians were sparsely supported and short-lived. It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that librarians again rallied around social issues and concerns,²⁷ this time with vigor and determination.

B. Social Responsibilities Round Table

Although the concept of social responsibility among librarians was not new in the late 1960s, the movement came of age during this time,²⁸ beginning with the creation of the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) in 1968.²⁹ The leaders of the movement were eager to create a mechanism within the ALA whose principal concern was limited to the relationship of social issues to libraries and librarians. The proposal of these activists to create the SRRT was not without controversy and lively debate before the general ALA membership.³⁰ Nevertheless, the resolution creating the Round Table eventually was approved.³¹

For its founders, the SRRT's purpose was "to provide a forum where responsible membership discussion can take place, to examine current library efforts to face issues, and to propose action programs to the Association."³²

vestigatory committees, and a plea for continued assistance to European librarians displaced from fascist countries who sought asylum in the Western Hemisphere.

24. *Id.* at 2352.

25. *Id.* at 2353.

26. *Id.* at 2354.

27. *But cf.* J. SHERA, *supra* note 6, at 297 (contending that issues focused primarily on intellectual freedom and censorship).

28. See generally J. SHERA, *supra* note 6, at 297-300; LANDMARKS OF LIBRARY LITERATURE, 1876-1976, at 79-81 (D. Ellsworth & N. Stevens ed. 1976); *Social Responsibility and the Library Bill of Rights: The Berninghausen Debate*, 98 LIBR. J. 25 (1973) [hereinafter cited as *Berninghausen Debate*]. The nineteen essays collected there were written in response to David Berninghausen's article, published in an earlier issue of *Library Journal*. See Berninghausen, *Antithesis in Librarianship: Social Responsibility vs. The Library Bill of Rights*, 97 LIBR. J. 3675 (1972). Curley reports that the subheading of "Social responsibilities" (under "Librarians") first appeared in *Library Literature* in 1968 and that the heading "Libraries and social and economic problems" first appeared in 1964. Curley, *supra* note 2, at 81.

29. See Schuman, *Preface to SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LIBRARIES* at ix, ix (P. Schuman ed. 1976).

30. See *Business—Not Quite as Usual*, 93 LIBR. J. 2797, 2799-2800 (1968).

31. Kenneth Duchac has been credited with obtaining membership approval of the proposed resolution by his impassioned "Plea for Social Responsibility" to the membership. See *id.* at 2798-99 for the full text of his presentation. However, through a series of parliamentary procedures, the ALA's Committee on Organizations managed to postpone the formal creation of SRRT. This did not prevent about 100 members from participating in the first unofficial organizational meeting of the SRRT at the conclusion of the 1968 ALA meeting. See *id.* at 2800.

32. Curley, *supra* note 2, at 91; Dorothy Bendix one of the founders of SRRT, reports that the functions and responsibility of the proposed SRRT were

[t]o provide a forum on the major issues of our times—war and peace, race, inequality of opportunity and justice, civil rights, violence—and the responsibility of libraries in relation to these issues; to examine current library programs on these issues; to propose activities

For the most part, these concepts were incorporated into the SRRT bylaws.³³ The SRRT saw itself as the advocate and conscience of the ALA.

C. The Debate

Although most ALA members acknowledged the activists' right to discuss issues at membership meetings, many in the profession disagreed with the tenets of the movement and voiced their dissent.³⁴ Opponents argued that the library had a unique and traditional role to play in society—to provide education, recreation, and information.³⁵ The uniqueness of this function distinguished the library from other service institutions. By performing tasks outside this basic function, libraries were delving into areas that they were not designed or equipped to handle effectively.³⁶ Social concerns, opponents argued, are better left to other social agencies.³⁷

This argument maintains that neutrality on all issues and controversies is a key and essential characteristic of libraries.³⁸ The library is obligated to present all sides with equal vigor: to take sides on an issue only destroys the library's credibility as the guardian of intellectual freedom.³⁹ Further, taking a position on an issue forces a library to try to distinguish which information is correct when new facts may discredit the original premise.⁴⁰

Numerous opponents advanced the notion that librarians are not qualified politically to become involved in nonlibrary issues, although these opponents

which will increase understanding of these issues; to promote action toward resolution of attendant, critical problems.

Symposium, *supra* note 2, at 43.

33. As stated in its bylaws the purpose of the SRRT was (a) to provide a forum for the discussion of the responsibilities of libraries in relation to the important problems of social change which face institutions and librarians; (b) to provide for exchange of information among all ALA units about library activities with the goal of increasing understanding of current social problems; (c) to act as a stimulus to the Association and its various units in making libraries more responsive to current social needs; (d) to present programs, arrange exhibits and carry out other appropriate activities. *Organization and Action: How to Play Socially Responsible Round Table Games*, ALA SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ROUND TABLE, April 1972, at 11, 11 (SRRT newsletter).

34. Curley, *supra* note 2, at 95.

35. See, e.g., Hillard, *A Profession Gone Mad*, 95 LIBR. J. 42, 43 (1970); Gaines, *Let's Return to Traditional Library Service: Facing the Failure of Social Experimentation*, 55 WILSON LIBR. BULL. 50, 51 (1980) [hereinafter cited as *Facing the Failure*]; Gaines, *Faddism*, 95 LIBR. J. 2235 (1970) [hereinafter cited as *Faddism*].

36. Some believe that the decline of public funds to libraries is related directly to the library's performance of functions outside its traditional role. See Hillard, *supra* note 35, at 43.

37. *Id.*; *Facing the Failure*, *supra* note 35, at 50; *Symposium*, *supra* note 2, at 52 (comments by Gorberg).

38. *Faddism*, *supra* note 35, at 2235; *Berninghausen Debate*, *supra* note 28, at 30 (comments by Martin); Hillard, *supra* note 35, at 43; Berninghausen, *supra* note 28, at 3677-78; *Symposium*, *supra* note 3, at 46 (comments by Rineer).

39. Berninghausen, *supra* note 28, at 3680 (making a rather strong allegation as to the skewed reporting of the library press in favor of social responsibility). See also Hillard, *supra* note 35, at 43; *Symposium*, *supra* note 2, at 52 (comments by Cohen).

40. Berninghausen, *supra* note 28, at 3677-78; *Faddism*, *supra* note 35, at 2235.

acknowledged that individual librarians have the right to participate in these issues as citizens.⁴¹ Additionally, many stressed that libraries as a collective group or in an association should not sponsor or support nonlibrary activities.⁴²

In his article "Antithesis in Librarianship: Social Responsibility vs. the Library Bill of Rights," David Berninghausen lashed out against the social responsibility movement with perhaps the most effective argument that has been made to date. He incorporated into his main assertion many of the arguments previously discussed, notably that intellectual freedom (as part of the ALA's Library Bill of Rights) and social responsibility are incompatible and therefore cannot coexist.⁴³ He also maintained that intellectual freedom demands neutrality on all issues, unlike social responsibility, which by its very nature dictates bipartisanship,⁴⁴ and that libraries are obligated to present all sides of issues.

Publication of the Berninghausen article roused proponents of social responsibility to justify their position publicly. Berninghausen's comments generated widespread debate within the profession,⁴⁵ and perhaps brought the social responsibility debate to a climax. *Library Journal* devoted much of its January 1, 1973, issue⁴⁶ to this controversy, affording many librarians the opportunity to respond.

Those in direct opposition to Berninghausen's main contention argued that intellectual freedom is a social responsibility and not an end in itself.⁴⁷ The two concepts are not at odds; proponents of social responsibility do not advocate using propaganda and censorship to accomplish their purposes. On the contrary, the social responsibility movement encouraged debate and discussion.⁴⁸ Moreover, one can be committed equally to both intellectual freedom and social responsibility.⁴⁹

Others argued that libraries always have been concerned with and involved in social issues⁵⁰ and have never been neutral on certain issues.⁵¹ To remain neutral would deny the assumption of the political process within

41. *Symposium, supra* note 2, at 46 (comments by Rineer); *Berninghausen Debate, supra* note 28, at 30, 36 (comments by Martin, Hillard); Berninghausen, *supra* note 28, at 3680; Hillard, *supra* note 35, at 43.

42. Hillard, *supra* note 35, at 43; *Symposium, supra* note 2, at 46 (comments by Rineer).

43. Berninghausen, *supra* note 28, at 3678.

44. *Id.* at 3678-79.

45. This is evident in the number of letters submitted to the editors of the *Library Journal* in response to Berninghausen's article. See 98 *LIBR. J.* 6 (1973); 98 *LIBR. J.* 3636 (1973); 98 *LIBR. J.* 1524 (1973).

46. See *Berninghausen Debate, supra* note 28.

47. See *Berninghausen Debate, supra* note 28, at 34-35, 39, 40 (comments by Immroth, Byam, and Bendix).

48. *Id.* at 40 (comments by Bendix).

49. *Id.* at 34-35 (comments by Immroth).

50. See, e.g., *id.* at 25, 29-30, 40 (comments by Wedgeworth, Oboler, and Bendix).

51. *Id.* at 26, 27 (comments by Summers, Sellen); *Symposium, supra* note 2, at 49 (comments by Wedgeworth).

which the library operates.⁵² To take no stand is in reality taking a stand.⁵³ Moreover, to remain silent on an issue is to condone the status quo.⁵⁴

Closely aligned to the proponent's neutrality argument is the notion that librarians have a right to become socially active if they choose to do so. One cannot readily separate the individual from the profession.⁵⁵

Several years after the Berninghausen debate had cooled, Patricia Schuman, a prolific and outspoken advocate of social responsibility, responded to the major arguments being advanced by opponents of the movement. Like others, she also contended that libraries have been advocating favorable legislation, among other things, for years.⁵⁶ Neutrality, according to Schuman, only places the destiny of librarians and libraries in the hands of decision makers who may not be receptive to library issues and concerns.⁵⁷ Further, when social issues are beckoning for solutions, neutrality can only be interpreted as affirmation of those issues.⁵⁸ She also agreed with those who argue that intellectual freedom is not an end in itself, merely a component of social responsibility.⁵⁹ Finally, she maintained that the economic realities preclude libraries from providing "free access to information on all sides of all issues."⁶⁰

III. Law Library Movement

A. Roots

During its formative years, the law library profession was preoccupied with the development, growth, and advancement of the profession,⁶¹ leaving little time for other pursuits. It is understandable, therefore, that a review of the literature reveals scant information on the subject of law librarianship and social responsibility.

Nevertheless, a sprinkle of related writings indicate that there was at least minimal interest in social responsibility during the early years.⁶² Not until

52. *Symposium*, *supra* note 2, at 49 (comments by Wedgeworth).

53. *Berninghausen Debate*, *supra* note 28, at 39 (comments by Byam).

54. *Symposium*, *supra* note 2, at 45 (comments by Rabban).

55. *Berninghausen Debate*, *supra* note 28, at 28-29, 32, 33 (comments by Schuman, Josey, and Jones). See also *Symposium*, *supra* note 2, at 45 (comments by Rabban); Dunbar, *Librarian and/or Citizen?*, in *SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LIBRARIES*, *supra* note 29, at 3.

56. Schuman, *Social Responsibility: An Agenda for the Future*, 101 *LIBR. J.* 251, 253 (1976).

57. *Id.* at 252.

58. *Id.*

59. *Id.*

60. *Id.*

61. See generally Brock, *Law Libraries and Librarians: A Revisionist History; or More than You Ever Wanted to Know*, 67 *LAW LIBR. J.* 325 (1974).

62. See, e.g., Hicks, *Law Libraries and the Public*, 6 *LAW LIBR. J.* 52 (1913) (making a strong and convincing plea for opening law libraries to the general public). See also Bitner, *The Educational Background of the University's Law Librarian*, 40 *LAW LIBR. J.* 49, 51 (1947); Falknor, *The Function of the Law School Librarian*, 30 *LAW LIBR. J.* 13, 15 (1937); Hicks, *Educational Requirements for Law Libraries*, 23 *LAW LIBR. J.* 62, 64 (1930) reprinted in 15 *ABA JOURNAL* 699 (1929) (paper presented at

World War II, however, did the law library literature reflect a growing concern for social responsibility issues. Understandably, patriotic themes played a dominant role in the Association's proceedings during this time period⁶³ and in the Cold War period that followed.⁶⁴

1. The Conference of Concerned Law Librarians

As did the profession generally, law librarians confronted social responsibility issues earnestly in the late 1960s and early 1970s, both individually and through professional activities. The Conference of Concerned Law Librarians (CCLL) played a major role in the development of the social responsibility movement during this time period.

At the AALL's 1970 annual meeting, the CCLL met informally and charted a plan of action for its future.⁶⁵ From the beginning, the group formed subcommittees to work on specific issues of interest to members.⁶⁶ Apparently, during its formative stages CCLL members discussed whether to officially affiliate with the ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table;⁶⁷ however, CCLL members decided against this and voted only to maintain contact with the

twenty-third annual meeting of American Association of Law Libraries); McDaniel, *The Educational and Cultural Background of a Law Librarian*, 23 LAW LIBR. J. 68, 69-70 (1930); Mettee, *The Potentialities of the Law Library*, 24 LAW LIBR. J. 18, 20 (1931).

63. See, e.g., Gary, *Our American Democracy*, 34 LAW LIBR. J. 263 (1941). The following year both the opening and closing banquet contained patriotic messages. See Newcomb, *Address of Welcome*, 35 LAW LIBR. J. 252 (1942); Fairchild, *Dusty and Dustless Tomes*, 35 LAW LIBR. J. 372 (1942). Because of the war, 1942 was the last year that the annual meeting was held until 1945. Newman, *The Roalfe Plan and the Middle Years, 1930-1942*, 49 LAW LIBR. J. 105, 117 (1956).

Between 1943 and 1944 only the Executive Committee of the Association met. In 1945 the Association obtained permission from the Office of Defense Transportation to hold its annual meeting "provided that not more than fifty persons attend." See MacDonald, *Up Until Now, 1943-1955*, 49 LAW LIBR. J. 118, 120 (1956). During the meeting several sessions and panel discussions were held on the theme of war. See, e.g., *Panel Discussion on Law Libraries in the War*, 38 LAW LIBR. J. 87 (1945); Hill, *Report of the Activities of the American Book Center for Aid to Devastated Libraries in War Areas*, 39 LAW LIBR. J. 156 (1946). The address at the thirty-ninth annual banquet focused on the responsibility of the legal profession in a democracy. See McClain, *The Necessity of a Capable Bar in a Democracy*, 39 LAW LIBR. J. 188 (1946).

64. See *Proceedings of the Fifty-First Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 51 LAW LIBR. J. 308, 314-18 (1958) (remarks by Robert B. Anderson, Secretary of the Treasury); Rhyne, *World Peace Through Law to Insure "Liberty, Equality and Justice"*, 51 LAW LIBR. J. 402 (1958); Acheson, *Elevate Them Guns a Little Lower*, 51 LAW LIBR. J. 428 (1958); Stern, *Worldwide Responsibilities of American Law Librarians*, 54 LAW LIBR. J. 139 (1961).

65. Cohen, *President's Page*, AALL NEWSLETTER, Oct. 1970, at 3, 4.

66. See *Conference of Concerned Law Librarians*, AALL NEWSLETTER, Oct. 1970, at 11. The Steering Committee consisted of George S. Grossman, chair, Fred Baum, Jane Braucher, Gertrude Johnson, and Iris Wildman. Four subcommittees also were formed in the following areas: women (chaired by Iris Wildman), minority groups (chaired by Cameron Allen), prisoners (chaired by Ed Bander), and war and peace (chaired by Roy Mersky).

67. *Concerned Law Librarians Organize for 1971*, 95 LIBR. J. 3424 (1970).

SRRT.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the CCLL was modeled after the SRRT⁶⁹ to provide a forum for concerned law librarians where social issues could be discussed.⁷⁰

The CCLL held its first formal meeting at the 1971 annual meeting of the Association and, wasting no time, voted to introduce four resolutions at the opening session.⁷¹ The Association membership approved the resolutions for discussion at the third business session.⁷²

The first resolution proposed to create a one-year special committee to study and chart a course of action for the improvement of law library services to prisoners.⁷³ Discussion on the floor was chiefly limited to clarifying the intent of the motion.⁷⁴

The second resolution was introduced in two parts. The first part called for endorsement of the Equal Rights Amendment.⁷⁵ The resolution passed, after one person opposed it in debate on grounds that the Association should remain neutral on such issues.⁷⁶ The second part of the resolution called for the AALL to back maternity leave for library employees.⁷⁷ After lengthy discussion on the proposed wording and alleged vagueness of the resolution, the motion was defeated.⁷⁸

The third resolution, among other things, directed the Executive Board to investigate ways to improve minority recruitment of students and personnel in the law library profession.⁷⁹ After a short explanation, the three-part resolution passed with no discussion.⁸⁰

The last resolution, composed of two parts, then was introduced.⁸¹ Realizing that the first part of the resolution, which called for the immediate withdrawal of United States forces from Vietnam, would be controversial, the CCLL members carefully worded it to state that only the majority of the AALL members "present and voting" approved the resolution.⁸² Indeed, it proved to be controversial. Recurring themes in opposition to the resolution were heard during the debate on the floor: that law librarians do not

68. *Id.*

69. Letter from George S. Grossman, AALL NEWSLETTER, Dec. 1970, at 14, 15.

70. *Id.* Unlike the SRRT, however, the CCLL said it would bring before the AALL membership only those social issues in which the law library profession could play a special role.

71. *Id.*

72. *Proceedings of the 64th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 64 LAW LIBR. J. 426, 427 (1971). For the text of the resolutions as introduced see *id.*

73. *Id.* at 433.

74. *Id.* at 433-34.

75. *Id.* at 434.

76. *Id.*

77. *Id.*

78. *Id.* at 434-36.

79. *Id.* at 436.

80. *Id.*

81. *Id.* at 436.

82. *Id.*

have the political expertise to make intelligent decisions on such issues,⁸³ and that the issue called for individual action rather than action by persons in their professional capacity as law librarians.⁸⁴ The membership agreed, at least in part, with these arguments and tabled the resolution.⁸⁵ The second part of the resolution, calling for the AALL to conduct future programs discussing world peace through law, passed without debate.⁸⁶

By the end of the 1971 annual meeting, each of the CCLL's four subcommittees had generated at least one resolution and had been successful in obtaining at least partial endorsement for its proposal. Two of the subcommittees were directly responsible for the Executive Board's creation of special committees.⁸⁷

The CCLL members' initial success, coupled with President Viola Bird's consistent support,⁸⁸ acted as a catalyst to supporters of social responsibility. The momentum generated was manifested at the 1972 annual meeting, which was dominated by resolutions and discussion related to law librarians' social responsibility on various issues.

Again, each CCLL subcommittee proposed resolutions that often evoked lengthy and heated debate. The Subcommittee on Minorities introduced a resolution which had a preface that many Association members thought unnecessarily implicated AALL in discrimination.⁸⁹ The preface was stricken, leaving intact the conclusion,⁹⁰ which called for AALL to take affirmative steps in the recruitment, education, and placement of minority law librarians. This was a reaffirmation and extension of the subcommittee's previous year's resolution.

A resolution sponsored by the Subcommittee on Women condemned salary discrimination on the basis of sex.⁹¹ Although an argument was made that such a resolution was unnecessary, because it duplicated federal law, the resolution was adopted.⁹²

The War and Peace Subcommittee again introduced a resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of United States troops from Vietnam.⁹³ The

83. *Id.* at 437.

84. *Id.*

85. *Id.* The vote to table was 105 to 52.

86. *Id.*

87. Bird, *President's Page*, 64 LAW LIBR. J. 277 (1971). The list of AALL committees in this issue included the Special Committee on Library Service to Prisoners and the Special Committee on Minorities. 64 LAW LIBR. J. 424 (1971).

88. Bird, *President's Page*, 64 LAW LIBR. J. 419 (1971).

89. *Proceedings of the 65th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 65 LAW LIBR. J. 333, 351-52 (1972) [hereinafter cited as *Proceedings—65th Annual Meeting*].

90. *Id.* at 352.

91. *Id.*

92. *Id.* at 353.

93. *Id.* at 373.

resolution failed to be adopted for basically the same reasons as it had failed the previous year.⁹⁴

Other CCLL-endorsed resolutions were introduced. These resolutions included urging financial continuation of the *Race Relations Reporter*;⁹⁵ calling for solidarity for Zoia Horn and the Harrisburg Eight, asserting a confidential relationship between librarians and clients and cessation of governmental invasion of privacy;⁹⁶ protesting the jailing of editor Ralph Ginzburg;⁹⁷ and encouraging the Meiklejohn Civil Library to collect materials on intellectual freedom.⁹⁸ An additional resolution, not identified as a CCLL-sanctioned proposal, but clearly related to the Zoia Horn resolution proposed by CCLL members, was introduced but failed without discussion.⁹⁹

Of the sixteen resolutions introduced at the 1972 annual meeting, half pertained to social responsibility issues and were proposed by CCLL members or associates. Moreover, resolutions proposed the year before had been fully realized by the end of the 1972 annual meeting. The Special Committee on Law Library Service to Prisoners was now a standing committee of the Association. The antidiscrimination clause had been fully incorporated into the Association's bylaws,¹⁰⁰ and the minority and women's subcommittees of CCLL were instrumental in obtaining endorsements of their respective resolutions. Except for one noncontroversial issue (the Meiklejohn Library resolution), none of the "intellectual freedom" resolutions fared very well, indicating perhaps that intellectual freedom did not have the same priority in AALL that it did in the ALA.

2. Contemporary Social Problems Committee

The CCLL, which was controversial, was criticized for being antiestablishment and not wanting to work within the Association.¹⁰¹ After the 1973 annual meeting the CCLL voted to disband,¹⁰² but was soon succeeded by the Contemporary Social Problems Committee (CSPC).

Former members of the CCLL drafted a resolution calling for the creation of a committee to "investigate desirable professional contributions of law libraries toward the solution of contemporary social problems."¹⁰³ The

94. *Id.*

95. *Id.* The resolution was approved without discussion.

96. *Id.* at 374. The entire resolution failed. A shortened and revised version was introduced later; it, too, was defeated. *See id.* at 375.

97. *Id.* at 374-75. The resolution failed without discussion.

98. *Id.* at 375. The resolution was approved without discussion.

99. *Id.* at 374. This resolution called for the AALL to deplore government interference with the media.

100. *Proceedings—65th Annual Meeting*, *supra* note 89, at 373.

101. *See Proceedings of the 66th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 66 *LAW LIBR. J.* 379, 386 (1973).

102. *See id.* at 386.

103. *Id.* at 385. It was apparent that the proponents were actually requesting a standing committee

resolution stimulated lengthy and spirited debate,¹⁰⁴ especially with respect to its intended purpose.

Proponents argued that the intent behind the proposed committee was to provide a forum within the Association for law librarians concerned with social issues.¹⁰⁵ As had been the case with its predecessor, the CCLL, the proposed committee was fashioned after the Social Responsibilities Round Table.¹⁰⁶ The floor discussion that followed further defined the intended purpose of the CSPC: to emphasize "bibliographic work" and "professional solutions" as the major activities of the committee.¹⁰⁷ This interpretation of the committee's purpose must either have been consistent with the intent of its supporters or was necessary for the resolution to be approved. Following the discussion the resolution to create the CSPC was approved by about a two-to-one margin.¹⁰⁸

The CSPC saw itself fulfilling its mandated purpose by "study[ing] contemporary social problems with the goal of suggesting ways in which law librarians can make professional contributions toward their solutions."¹⁰⁹ The committee did not approach its task with the vigor and determination of its predecessor, however. Unlike the CCLL, the CSPC got off to a tenuous and traumatic beginning. During its first two years of existence, the CSPC met only once and was chaired by three different individuals.¹¹⁰

Two years after its creation, the CSPC submitted its first report to the Association. The report notes that the CSPC was studying ways to make law libraries more accessible to the traditional nonlaw library users.¹¹¹ The CSPC was composed of eleven members at the time.¹¹² After two years of relative inaction, it was beginning to show signs of activity.

rather than a special committee as was reflected in the proposed resolution. During the debate the resolution was amended to reflect this intent. See *id.* at 386.

104. *Id.* at 385-87.

105. See *id.* at 385-87.

106. *Id.* at 385.

107. *Id.* at 387.

108. *Id.*

109. Contemporary Social Problems Committee, *Annual Report*, 68 LAW LIBR. J. 353 (1975) [hereinafter cited as *Committee Report 1975*].

110. *Id.* at 353. The meeting was held at the 1974 annual meeting with less than twenty-four hours' notice. Why the drastic drop in activities took place is not clear from a review of *Law Library Journal*. Perhaps part of the reason lies in the fact that from the initial Social Problems Committee of 1973 only two individuals were members of the CSPC the following year. Compare *Officers, Committees, and Representatives*, 66 LAW LIBR. J. 377 (1973) with *Officers, Committees, and Representatives*, 67 LAW LIBR. J. 450 (1974). In turn, the 1975 committee contained only four members who also served on the 1974 committee. See *Officers, Committees, and Representatives*, 68 LAW LIBR. J. 368 (1975). By 1976, however, half of the committee members had been members the previous year. See *Officers, Committees, and Representatives*, 69 LAW LIBR. J. 434 (1976). By this time the committee again started to show signs of activity. Perhaps until this time the continuity needed to carry on meaningful activities had been missing.

111. *Committee Report 1975*, *supra* note 109, at 353-54.

112. *Id.* at 354.

By 1976 the CSPC had grown to sixteen members and had set forth an agenda for the following year.¹¹³ That year also the AALL Executive Board paved the way for the eventual creation of two special interest sections: Contemporary Social Problems and Law Library Service to Institutional Residents.¹¹⁴ However, the Contemporary Social Problems SIS was not actually approved until December 1977, thereby officially abolishing the CSPC.¹¹⁵

By the end of the 1977 annual meeting the CSPC had accomplished one of its intended goals: it had sponsored a workshop on human rights.¹¹⁶ This was apparently the first time that a committee had made an independent contribution to an annual meeting.¹¹⁷

3. Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section

Transformation of the CSPC into a special interest section gave the group new life and vitality.¹¹⁸ At the 1978 annual meeting the new SIS introduced two of the most highly debated and controversial resolutions to date.

The first resolution called for affirmation of the Equal Rights Amendment and resolved that after 1980 no annual meeting would be held in a state, the District of Columbia, or a foreign country that had not ratified the ERA.¹¹⁹ After lengthy debate, and despite several parliamentary maneuvers to remove the resolution from the floor,¹²⁰ the resolution was approved.¹²¹

Next came a resolution on affirmative action, which proved to be no less controversial.¹²² The Section wanted the AALL to reaffirm its commitment to affirmative action in light of the *Bakke* case, which was pending at that time. When the final vote was taken, the preface, which many thought was worded too strongly, had been deleted. Only a revised conclusion of the initial resolution was left. Association members voted to continue supporting affirmative action, and directed the Executive Board to draft advisory affirmative action guidelines.¹²³

113. Contemporary Social Problems Committee, *Annual Report*, 69 LAW LIBR. J. 412 (1976). The agenda called for studies to examine disseminating legal information to lay users of law libraries, the implications of the Freedom of Information Act for law libraries, and the feasibility of providing exhibit space to nonprofit publishers at the AALL meetings. *Id.*

114. Contemporary Social Problems Committee, *Annual Report*, 70 LAW LIBR. J. 403, 409 (1977) [hereinafter cited as *Committee Report 1977*].

115. Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, *Annual Report*, 71 LAW LIBR. J. 521 (1978) [hereinafter cited as *Section Report 1978*].

116. *Committee Report 1977*, *supra* note 114, at 403.

117. *Id.*

118. *Section Report 1978*, *supra* note 115, at 521.

119. *Proceedings of the 71st Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 71 LAW LIBR. J. 547, 565, 574 (1978).

120. *Id.* at 570.

121. *Id.* at 574.

122. *Id.*

123. *Id.* at 579.

The Section's first full year proved to be a fruitful one. Not only did it obtain approval of two controversial resolutions, but it also organized and sponsored a workshop at the 1978 annual meeting,¹²⁴ published two issues of a newsletter,¹²⁵ and increased its membership to forty-two members.¹²⁶

After these successes, the Section defined its main goal as a "conscience raising effort,"¹²⁷ and the Section began organizing and sponsoring presentations at AALL annual meetings.¹²⁸ The Section further initiated an "Open Forum" designed to brainstorm issues and formulate strategies in bringing issues to the floor of the annual meetings.¹²⁹ However, it was not until 1984 that the Section again introduced a resolution at an annual meeting.¹³⁰ A sexual harassment resolution was approved with only one minor amendment and with very little discussion.¹³¹ During 1984 the Section, which listed seventy-eight members,¹³² also initiated the "Concerned" column as a regular feature in the *AALL Newsletter*¹³³ and created a subcommittee on nuclear

124. *Section Report 1978*, *supra* note 115, at 521. The workshop was entitled, "Introduction to the Rights of the Handicapped." See 71 LAW LIBR. J. 581 (1978) (synopsis of the convention program).

125. *Section Report 1978*, *supra* note 115, at 521.

126. Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, *Annual Report*, 72 LAW LIBR. J. 719, 720 (1979) [hereinafter cited as *Section Report 1979*].

127. *Id.* at 719.

128. *Id.* One such presentation was a panel discussion on providing legal services to such clients as prostitutes and homosexuals. See *Representing the Unpopular Client*, 72 LAW LIBR. J. 674 (1979). The 1980 workshop was on "Law Libraries and the Elderly." 73 LAW LIBR. J. 1015 (1980) (list of program abstracts). The 1981 program was "Current Legal Problems of Aliens and Refugees in America's Melting Pot: Information Resources." Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, *Annual Report*, 74 LAW LIBR. J. 770 (1981) [hereinafter cited as *Section Report 1981*]. The Section also planned and sponsored programs on "The Status of Men and Women in Law Librarianship" and "The Effects of the New Right on the Administration of Justice" at the 1982 annual meeting. Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, *Annual Report*, 75 LAW LIBR. J. 456 (1982). In 1983 the Section presented a panel on "Censorship and Law Librarianship" at the annual meeting. Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, *Annual Report*, 76 LAW LIBR. J. 151 (1983) [hereinafter cited as *Section Report 1983*]. The following year the Section sponsored yet another panel discussion, this time on domestic violence. Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, *Annual Report*, 77 LAW LIBR. J. 354 (1984-85) [hereinafter cited as *Section Report 1984*]. At the 1985 annual meeting the Section was responsible for two programs, "Private Life and the Law" and "Toxic Torts." Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, *Annual Report*, 77 LAW LIBR. J. 747 (1984-85) [hereinafter cited as *Section Report 1985*]. See also Puckett, *Controversial Issues: An Established Tradition*, 16 AALL NEWSLETTER 81, 81 (1984).

129. *Section Report 1979*, *supra* note 126, at 719-20. The "Open Forum" concept was introduced in the December 1980 Section newsletter to solicit suggestions, discussion, and appropriate action. Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, *Annual Report*, 73 LAW LIBR. J. 766 (1980).

130. *Proceedings of the 77th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 77 LAW LIBR. J. 403, 422 (1984-85) [hereinafter cited as *Proceedings—77th Annual Meeting*].

131. *Id.* at 428-29.

132. *Section Report 1984*, *supra* note 128, at 355.

133. *Concerned*, 16 AALL NEWSLETTER 18 (1984). This replaced the Section's newsletter, *Contemporary Social Problems News*, which had appeared sporadically since its inception. In 1978 the Section reported publication of two issues of its newsletter, and anticipated publication of an additional issue. *Section Report 1978*, *supra* note 124, at 521. In 1981, only one issue of the newsletter was distributed. *Section Report 1981*, *supra* note 136, at 770. It was two years later when the Section again published

arms.¹³⁴ The following year would prove to be even more eventful.

The Section introduced a nuclear freeze resolution at the 1985 annual meeting. President Jacquelyn Jurkins immediately raised the question of whether the resolution was "germane" to the Association's stated purposes.¹³⁵ Because this question was submitted to the membership before any discussion took place, and because the resulting vote did little to resolve the matter,¹³⁶ several members immediately rose to question the ruling and procedures.¹³⁷ A motion then was made to adjourn the meeting, which would have cut off further debate;¹³⁸ however, forceful objections were voiced against adjournment.¹³⁹ From the discussion that followed, it became clear that a great many of the members wanted the opportunity to discuss the substance of the resolution, so the discussion was tabled until the following business session.¹⁴⁰ Both supporters and opponents of the resolution were bracing themselves for a lively debate at the next business meeting.

At the second general business meeting, the Section's nuclear freeze resolution was brought to the floor for discussion.¹⁴¹ Before discussing the actual substance of the resolution, however, a procedural matter had to be resolved—reconsideration of the previous action, which had declared the resolution outside the purpose of the Association.¹⁴² After brief discussion, a majority of the members voted that the resolution was indeed germane to the Association's stated purpose,¹⁴³ thereby allowing discussion on the substance of the resolution.

The lengthy discussion that followed confirmed that this was a highly controversial issue. Only the earlier ERA and affirmative action resolutions had generated similar polemics. Several members said that endorsement of

a sole issue of its newsletter. *Section Report 1983*, *supra* note 128, at 151. By 1984 the Section had renamed its newsletter *Concerned* and had published and distributed three issues. *Section Report 1984*, *supra* note 128, at 354. Shortly thereafter, however, the AALL refused to fund the Section's newsletter for the 1984-85 fiscal year. *Id.* It became apparent that *Concerned* was not going to survive without some sort of financial assistance. Apparently, a mutual agreement was worked out between the Association and the Section, whereby the concept of the newsletter was to be preserved in the "Concerned" column of the *AALL Newsletter*. See *Concerned*, *supra*, at 18. The column has not appeared since the December 1984 newsletter, however.

134. *Proceedings—77th Annual Meeting*, *supra* note 130, at 430.

135. *Proceedings of the 78th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 77 LAW LIBR. J. 775, 789 (1984-85). Members previously had raised the issue of relevancy from the floor, but this was the first time it had been raised by a presiding officer.

136. One hundred six members believed the resolution irrelevant to the Association's purpose; 104 felt otherwise. *Id.* at 789.

137. *Id.* at 790.

138. *Id.* at 791.

139. *Id.*

140. *Id.*

141. *Id.* at 797.

142. *Id.* at 798.

143. *Id.* at 799. One hundred sixty members thought the resolution germane; 89 did not.

the resolution was outside the Association's realm.¹⁴⁴ Others said they favored the idea of the resolution but objected to its wording.¹⁴⁵ Finally, a motion to table the resolution was made but defeated.¹⁴⁶ It was obvious that the members present were inclined to let the resolution go to the floor rather than terminate debate on the issue.

Supporters, on the other hand, tried to connect the relevancy of the resolution to the Association and to law libraries in general.¹⁴⁷ They were successful, and the resolution was approved with amendments by an almost two-to-one margin.¹⁴⁸ This had been the first time that the Association had endorsed a controversial resolution that was not connected to sex or racial discrimination issues.

4. Other Socially Concerned Groups

The CSPS and its predecessors were not the only socially concerned groups among law librarians.¹⁴⁹ One of the least controversial and perhaps most productive groups that evolved during the early 1970s eventually became the Special Interest Section on Law Library Service to Institutional Residents. As an AALL committee, and as a SIS, this group generated many reports¹⁵⁰ and articles,¹⁵¹ and sponsored several panel discussions¹⁵² pertaining to prison law libraries. In 1981 this Section published the first issue of its newsletter, *Institutional News*.¹⁵³ Ironically, however, that year the Section also

144. *Id.* at 802, 803.

145. *Id.* at 800-01, 803-04.

146. *Id.* at 805.

147. *Id.* at 802, 804.

148. *Id.* at 808. The resolution passed, 111 to 59.

149. *See, e.g.*, the 1972 reports from two chapters, the Law Librarians of New England and the Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C., 65 LAW LIBR. J. 305 (1972). *See also Contemporary Social Problems*, 16 AALL NEWSLETTER 17 (1984) (noting that an antinuclear resolution was endorsed by the Minnesota chapter).

150. *Proceedings—65th Annual Meeting, supra* note 89, at 348-49, 353. *See* committee reports as follows: Special Committee on Law Library Services to Prisoners, *Annual Report*, 65 LAW LIBR. J. 318 (1972); Law Library Service to Prisoners, *Annual Report*, 66 LAW LIBR. J. 357 (1973); Law Library Service to Prisoners, *Annual Report*, 67 LAW LIBR. J. 439 (1974); Law Library Service to Prisoners, *Annual Report*, 68 LAW LIBR. J. 358 (1975); Law Library Service to Prisoners, *Annual Report*, 69 LAW LIBR. J. 419 (1976); Law Library Service to Prisoners, *Annual Report*, 70 LAW LIBR. J. 409 (1977). *See also* section reports as follows: Law Library Service to Institution Residents, *Annual Report*, 71 LAW LIBR. J. 521 (1978); Law Library Service to Institutionalized Residents, *Annual Report*, 72 LAW LIBR. J. 720 (1979); Law Library Service to Institutional Residents, *Annual Report*, 73 LAW LIBR. J. 766 (1980); Law Library Service to Institution Residents, *Annual Report*, 74 LAW LIBR. J. 771 (1981).

151. *See, e.g.*, Poe, *A Spark of Hope for Prisoners*, 66 LAW LIBR. J. 59 (1973); Werner, *The Present Legal Status and Conditions of Prison Law Libraries*, 66 LAW LIBR. J. 259 (1973). The committee and section reports, *supra* note 150, are also a rich source of information regarding publications and writings by this section.

152. *Prison Law Library Service: Questions and Models*, 72 LAW LIBR. J. 598 (1979); *Library Services for Prisoners*, 73 LAW LIBR. J. 1014 (1980) (abstract of programs held at seventy-third annual meeting).

153. Law Library Service to Institution Residents, *Annual Report*, 74 LAW LIBR. J. 771 (1981).

announced that its membership and resources had dwindled dramatically, forcing it to consider a merger with its original founding group, the CSPS.¹⁵⁴ The merger was accomplished by a vote of members of both sections and finalized by approval of the AALL Executive Board on July 2, 1981,¹⁵⁵ becoming the Standing Committee on Law Library Service to Institutional Residents. As a committee of the CSPS, its charge remained identical to its previous role within the Association—to publish, update, and disseminate Section publications on law library services to prisoners.¹⁵⁶

Another group, the Job Security, Remuneration, and Employment Security Committee,¹⁵⁷ deserves brief mention because it often found itself aligned with the CSPS's Subcommittee on Women's Rights on similar issues.¹⁵⁸ Despite the debate generated by the Job Security Committee's proposed code¹⁵⁹ and policy statement¹⁶⁰ at the 1974 and 1975 annual meetings, its policy statement on job security was approved at the 1975 annual meeting.¹⁶¹ Having met its original purpose and objectives, the Job Security Committee was abolished in 1979.¹⁶²

B. The Debate

The law library social responsibility debate did not have as extensive library press coverage as the public library movement.¹⁶³ As a result, it is necessary to rely primarily on two sources, the *Law Library Journal* and the *AALL Newsletter*, for coverage of the debate,¹⁶⁴ with the realization that much of the informal debate and discussion that took place was unreported. Although

154. *Id.* at 771.

155. *Law Library Service to Institutional Residents SIS*, 13 AALL NEWSLETTER 9, 9 (1981).

156. *Id.* at 9-10. The section recently revised two of its publications, *Recommended Collections for Prison and Other Institution Law Libraries* (1985) and *Directory: Law Libraries Offering Service to Prisoners* (1985). *Section Report 1985*, *supra* note 128, at 747.

157. Chairperson Jurkins reported that the initial purpose of the committee was "to investigate the overall personnel condition of the law library profession and to devise standards of suggested or desired practice to be submitted to the AALL membership for adoption." Job Security, Remuneration and Employment Security, *Annual Report*, 72 LAW LIBR. J. 726 (1979) [hereinafter cited as *Job Security Committee Report*].

158. *Proceedings—65th Annual Meeting*, *supra* note 89, at 352.

159. *Proceedings of the 67th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 67 LAW LIBR. J. 456, 459-63 (1974).

160. *Proceedings of the 68th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 68 LAW LIBR. J. 374, 382 (1975).

161. *Id.* at 383.

162. *Job Security Committee Report*, *supra* note 157, at 726.

163. This is due chiefly to the number of public library periodicals and journals that covered extensively the social responsibility movement. See Berninghausen, *supra* note 28, at 3636 (alleging that coverage of the social responsibility movement was skewed to favor its proponents).

164. Aside from a few items in the *AALL Newsletter*, the debate, for the most part, has taken place at the annual meetings upon the introduction and subsequent discussion of certain resolutions.

the debate among law librarians was not as much in the limelight as debate among public librarians, it was no less controversial.

As noted before, arguments advanced in opposition to the initial formation of the Conference of Concerned Law Librarians were similar in nature to those used by opponents of the ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table. Those arguments were that individuals wishing to participate in partisan politics should do so as individuals, not as law librarians,¹⁶⁵ and that involvement in social issues and partisan politics goes well beyond the stated constitutional purposes of the Association.¹⁶⁶ With slight variations, these arguments have been used repeatedly by those opposed to social responsibility movement. Similar arguments are still being made today.¹⁶⁷

From a review of the AALL proceedings, it appears that the proponents of social responsibility have not been as explicit as their opponents in arguing their case. Those advocating that law librarians take a position on various issues have tried to answer the critics by merely providing the opposing side of their critics' argument—that one cannot readily separate the individual from the professional¹⁶⁸ and that the Association has always been involved in controversial issues.¹⁶⁹ They also claim that taking no stand merely allows others to make the decisions.¹⁷⁰ These same arguments were advanced by the proponents of the public library social responsibility movement.

C. Discussion

Aside from a limited number of instances,¹⁷¹ the introduction and advocacy of social responsibility at the national level has been the sole domain of the Contemporary Social Problems Special Interest Section, its predecessors, and its associates. Although other groups and individuals have sponsored workshops and panel discussions and have produced timely articles and other publications on socially related topics, the Section and its associates have been the main force behind the social responsibility movement within the

165. See, e.g., Letter from Frank Lukes to AALL President Morris Cohen, AALL NEWSLETTER, Dec. 1970, at 12, 14.

166. *Id.* at 13.

167. See, e.g., Thomas, *Controversial Issues: Caution Advised*, 16 AALL NEWSLETTER 81 (1984).

168. See *Proceedings—65th Annual Meeting*, *supra* note 89, at 373; Puckett, *supra* note 128, at 88.

169. See, e.g., Puckett, *supra* note 128, at 81.

170. See *Proceedings—64th Annual Meeting*, *supra* note 72, at 437.

171. See, e.g., *Proceedings of the 74th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries*, 74 LAW LIBR. J. 713, 724 (1981). The AALL Executive Board introduced a resolution to amend the antidiscrimination clause of the Association's bylaws, so that discrimination on the basis of age or disability would be prohibited. See also *From the President*, 17 AALL NEWSLETTER 4 (1985) (announcing the appointment of a special committee on minorities in law librarianship). Of course, it is entirely possible that even these actions were inspired by discussions that the Section and its predecessors had initiated.

Association and law librarianship. Not only have the Section and its predecessors presented numerous programs on socially relevant topics at AALL annual meetings, but they also have introduced nineteen socially minded resolutions since 1970. Fifteen were introduced at the 1970 and 1971 annual meetings; eight of these failed to obtain approval. These remain the only resolutions introduced by the group that were not endorsed by the membership. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the reasons for the high level of activity during this time period, one may assume that the social climate of the early 1970s played a major role in law librarians' activism.

A total of eleven socially minded resolutions have received endorsement; seven were approved at the 1970 and 1971 annual meetings. After 1971 only four other resolutions have been introduced, all since 1978. All received approval. Of the eleven endorsed resolutions, seven related directly to sexual or racial discrimination issues. With the exception of the 1985 nuclear freeze resolution, the others have involved noncontroversial issues.

IV. Conclusion

From its beginning the Association's membership has maintained a moderate and cautious interpretation of social responsibility. This is due in part, perhaps, to law librarianship's historical alliance with the legal profession, which is generally considered to be a conservative force.¹⁷² Certainly, the sincere belief by many that social responsibility is simply not a proper function of the Association also has been a major factor.

For years, proponents have attempted to expand the purpose and definition of social responsibility principally through the introduction of socially minded resolutions. To a considerable degree, however, the initial moderate and cautious interpretation has withstood significant modification. Since the early seventies the membership has been consistently sensitive to racial and sexual issues having, or likely to have, direct impact on the Association. These two issues are exceptions to the Association's otherwise narrow interpretation of what is considered germane to its purposes. The reason perhaps rests, in part, with the fact that women have comprised a great majority of the Association's members. Understandably, there is high interest in discrimination issues. Not until 1985, fifteen years after the formation of the Conference of Concerned Law Librarians, was this trend altered. The 1985 nuclear freeze resolution was the first instance in which a resolution based on a contemporary social issue not directly linked to a sexual or racial matter was approved. It remains to be seen whether this precedent will continue.

172. Brock, *supra* note 61, at 353 (quoting Long, *Social Science Material for Law Libraries*, 32 LAW LIBR. J. 232 (1939)).

Except on limited occasions, apparently no study has been conducted to determine what impact, if any, the endorsed resolutions or program presentations have had on the Association. Nor have regular procedures been employed to determine whether the approved resolutions have been or are being carried out as intended. Such follow-up can provide members not only with the feedback necessary to better evaluate the effectiveness of the actions of the parties involved, but also to assess whether further action is required on a particular matter. If we, as an association, endorse a resolution, we have a further duty to ensure that the intent of the resolution is carried out to the fullest extent. However, this is likely to occur only if we first assess what steps have been taken and then are able to determine what further measures, if any, are needed to carry out the intended purpose of the resolution. At present there exists no mechanism that can accomplish this.

The debate is by no means settled.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, it is a debate worth continuing, for it has consistently afforded open and wholesome discussion, serving to remind us that all too often our Association is not independent from societal issues and concerns.

173. AALL President Robert Berring endorsed the plans for an open forum at the 1986 annual meeting, where members can "raise substantive issues that *they* feel should be a concern to the Association...[f]reed from the road blocks of parliamentary procedure." *From the President*, 17 AALL NEWSLETTER 96 (1985).