Report On City Library Is Made By Citizens Group

To: The Members of the Bartlesville City Commission,

In order to learn whether or not the Bartlesville City Commission have any plans for the future of the public library, the members of the citizens committee appointed by Mayor and the City Commission of this city, have made a further report to the citizens committee.

The members of this committee have pointed out to the library board, that the six libraries visited had no copies of this magazine. All of the librarians questioned said that the magazine had come to their libraries at various times, had not been destroyed, but that it had been destroyed.

The library board should make a further report to the citizens committee and ask for suggestions on how to improve the library.

The citizens committee will cover the handling of subversive literature, and the general manner of ordering the books in the city.

The library board has not given any indication as to what the city's public libraries will do with new books. They have not made any plans for the future of the public library.

A library committee will be formed to discuss these problems.

1. SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY
   - There is a need for a better understanding of the Soviet Union and its people.
   - The library should provide resources for this understanding.

2. NEGRO DIGEST
   - There is a need for more resources on the history and culture of African Americans.
   - The library should provide resources for this understanding.

3. THE NATION:
   - There is a need for more resources on the history and culture of African Americans.
   - The library should provide resources for this understanding.

The library board should take these suggestions into consideration when making future plans for the library.
tomorrow's sunrise... Without an understanding of socialism, the 20th century is incomprehensible. To help achieve that understanding is the purpose of the Monthly Review. With the subscription for this socialist periodical is the offer of a free book selected by the Book Find Club. "Book Find Club, 1. Cited as a Communist front. (California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, p. 382.)"

Again in the Nov. 19, 1949 issue of the Nation we found this advertisement on p. 498: "Books of all kinds from the U.S.S.R., just arrived. . . . 1950 subscriptions open for all Soviet newspapers and magazines. Four Continent Book Corp."

The Four Continent Book Corp. is cited by the Un-American Activities Committee report on p. 434: "Four Continent Book Corp. 1. Cited as a Communist publishing house located at 253 Fifth Avenue, New York City. (California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1938, p. 144.)"

The Nation is now available at the Bartlesville Public Library.

4. THE NEW REPUBLIC: This is another publication offering the views of the pro-Communist press, along with advertisements of erotic literature and atheist books.

On Dec. 28, 1949 p. 22 the New Republic published this advertisement: "Masterpieces of Erotic Literature by Joseph McCabe. These are the works of sensuality in ancient, medieval and modern times. (So far as we know, this is the first book ever published with the library's seal, accompanied by authoritative comments. It is both a discussion on an unusual, fascinating subject and something of a directory of the main works of erotic literature.)"

On p. 23 of the same issue is this advertisement:


Proof that The New Republic is not averse to the dissemination of the above disinformation is this advertisement appearing in the New Republic, April 3, 1950 p. 22. "Are your ears bent by pro-communist propaganda? In Fact" a weekly newsletter edited by George Seldes...."

Here is what the Un-American Activities committee has to say about "In Fact:"... The inspection of other libraries has been the means of bringing out methods which might be used to improve the Bartlesville Library without raising the library budget, which is indeed small by comparison with other cities.

One city (Gapapula) which operates on a smaller budget than the Bartlesville library features most impressively, the memory shelf. An interested citizen recently gave the library a complete interior decoration job as his gift to the library. One librarian keeps a scrap book of the news stories about the library and another one publishes annually a pamphlet reporting the year's activities. Encyclopaedia year books were found in all libraries (save one) and children's magazines were available in all of the libraries visited.

Citizens committee
M. Warren, chairman
Henryetta B. Wills, Secretary

Cited as a Communist front whose president and editor is George Seldes. ([Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, March 29, 1944, p. 49.)


3. Cited as a Communist front. (Pennsylvania Commonwealth Council before the reviewing board of the Philadelphia County Board of Assistance.)

Further evidence of the character of the New Republic is found in the issue of March 27, p. 23. "Debate Sensation! Is Russia a Socialist Community?" Yes" - Earl Browder, former general secretary of the Communist party. "No!" Max Shachtman, Chairman, Independent Socialist League. . . . The above citations we believe are sufficient to warrant the removal of Soviet Russia Today, Negro Digest, The Nation and The New Republic from the list of literature censored to the public in Bartlesville. This is no invasion upon the right of any individual citizen, or group of citizens to subscribe to and read these publications.

The members of the citizens' committee found that none of the six libraries visited had Soviet Russia Today or The Negro Digest. Two of them had The Nation and three of them had The New Republic.

Thus it is within the province of the library board to decide whether this brand of literature shall continue to be financed and distributed to the public at the expense of the Bartlesville taxpayers. There are available various official citations, which the members of the citizens' committee found in other libraries for the guidance of librarians in discussing subversive trends in literature. It is the suggestion of the citizens' committee that the citizens of the town be educated by the librarian and the members of the library board.

After visiting six other libraries, the members of the citizens' committee believe that in order to conduct the functions of the library library board should meet at least once a month.

These citizens are of the opinion that the presentation of controversial points of view on controversial subjects does not remove the general library from the sphere of prohibition by the library board.

The freedom of the press has never been interpreted to tolerate the printing of counterfeit money, counterfeit literature, designed to defame and destroy the heritage of American freedom, should be exposed instead of tolerated.
Library Board Makes Its Report To Commissioners

TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF BARTLESVILLE, OKLAHOMA:

In accordance with the request of the Board of Commissioners, made at the meeting of the Board of Commissioners with the Board of Directors of the Bartlesville Public Library on March 22, 1950, I am privileged to submit the contents of the City Library and a report on the general operation of the Library, made by the Library Board, the following report is submitted:

The premise upon which the Board contains the Library's contents proceeds may be summarized in the language of a portion of the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the Council of the American Library Association on June 18, 1948:

"1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other reading matter shall be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. No book or other reading matter of sound factual authority shall be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disagreement." It should be clearly understood that the Board's determination of any publication is suitable for inclusion in the City Library does not imply approval or advocacy of the views expressed in the book or periodical, whether expressed by the Board, or by its individual members. The Board believes that a policy of selection which would permit the Board, or any of its members, or of any board of directors of a library, or of any group of citizens in the community, would be subversive of the basic principles which differentiate the constitutional government of the United States from the governments of authoritarian states.

The contents and materials received by the Library Board have been made to the Library Board by interested citizens to the effect that the Department of Justice has promulgated no lists of periodicals, and that the Department has not in any other way attempted to provide any declaration as to whether any periodicals circulating freely in the United States and through the United States mails are considered by it to be subversive. The Library Board has made several requests by letter to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, both to the Oklahoma City and Washington offices, for information concerning a list allegedly compiled by that agency, but has received no written reply to its inquiries.

On Thursday, April 20, 1950, Mr. Earl Cullison, FBI agent, with headquarters at Oklahoma City, called on the President of this Board at his office in Bartlesville in connection with the recent report that there is an FBI list of communist or subversive periodicals. At President's request, this statement was repeated by Mr. Cullison to the Bartlesville City Manager. The Board has in its files a letter from Mr. Lucy Ann Babcock of the Oklahoma Library Commission, in which she states that in a telephone conversation with her on March 9, 1950, a representative of the FBI at its Oklahoma City office stated to her that the FBI maintains no list of communist or subversive periodicals. The Library Board has secured from the Superintendent of Documents of the United States a copy of a publication issued December 18, 1948, by the Committee on Un-American Activities of the United States House of Representatives, under the chairmanship of J. Parnell Thomas, entitled "Citations by Officials of Government Agencies and Organizations of Publications Found to Be Communist or Communist Front," listing publications found by various state and national legislative and investigating committees to be subversive, and it may be that this list is the one to which reference has been made in the statement to the Board.

It is the Library Board's opinion, based upon its careful appraisal of the periodicals currently received by the City Library, that the Periodical Section reflects a balanced list of reputable publications, and that it contains no periodicals which may properly be termed subversive. There are appended hereof extracts from the eighth edition of "Periodicals for Small and Medium Sized Libraries," published by the American Library Association, consisting of an organization of each of the periodicals now received at the Library.

Specific complaint has been made to the Board with regard to three publications: "The Nation," "The New Republic," and "Soviet Russia Today." All three of these periodicals are contained in the Bartlesville and Oklahoma City libraries. Appendix hereof are photostatic copies of letter dated March 9, 1950, from Mr. James E. Courson, librarian of the Tulsa Public Library, and letter dated April 21, 1950, from Mr. Clarence N. Paine, Director of the Oklahoma City Public Libraries, to the Board.

It is the Board's judgment that "The Nation" and "The New Republic" should be retained on the Bartlesville Library's subscription list. Their retention, with other publications, is essential to the effect that a total number of differing viewpoints on controversial subjects should contribute to a good library. Both publications are contained in the public libraries of other cities and this area. It may be noted that neither publication is cited in the list released by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the only "suspect" list which the Board has been able to locate.

The magazine "Soviet Russia Today" is sent without charge through the United States mails to public and school libraries, and has never appeared on the City Library's subscription list. The Board's examination of this publication indicates that it is of little value from the standpoint of interest, enlightenment, and that its retention cannot therefore be justified in view of the space limitations under which the library is operating.

The City Library contains some 25,000 volumes. It has therefore not been possible, since March 6, 1950, for the Board to evaluate all books on the shelves. The Board has, however, appraised the contents of the Political, Economic, and Social sections of the Library's catalog. It is the Board's opinion, based upon such appraisal, that the volumes contained in these sections relate on the basis of interest, information, enlightenment, and effect to the fullest practicable extent balance between conflicting viewpoints.

The Board's investigation of the general operation of the City Library discloses that its facilities are available for use by all citizens of the community. "Story hours" are held for both white and Negro children, which are now, and have always been,
conducted on a segregated basis. Neither the City Librarian, nor the Board of Directors of the Library, nor the Board has since been unable to locate this picture. This picture was published in the March 12 edition of the Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise, and in the March 13 edition of the Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman. The Board regrets the incident, and disclaims responsibility for it.

The Board wishes to reiterate its desire to receive the suggestions and advice of the citizens of the community concerning the administration of the City Library which will be received and carefully considered when presented at regular meetings of the Board. Lists of books and publications received by the Library will continue to be furnished to the local newspapers for publication, and will be kept on file at the Library for the convenience of patrons.

In the interest of providing a forum for comments with respect to the contents of the Library's bulletin board, the Library has established at the City Library a bulletin board upon which signed comments and criticisms of books and periodicals on the Library's shelves will be posted.

Respectfully submitted,

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BARTLESVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
RUSSELL W. DAVIS, President
OLGA A. BEECHER, Member
GEORGE N. CADE, Member
DARLENE ANDERSON ESARY, Member
EFFIE L. FREIBURGER, Member
RICHARD KANE, Member

Tulsa Public Library
Tulsa, Okla.
Office of the President, March 9th, 1950
Mr. R. W. Davis
P.O. Box 370

Bartlesville, Okla.

Dear Mr. Davis:
Mrs. Freiburger of your library board was in yesterday and asked that I write you. She wished to specifically state that we have not made any attempt at censorship by removing either "Soviet Republic Today," or the "New Republic." These publications are on our shelves and will remain there as long as I am in charge. It is true that we do not keep a permanent file of "Soviet Republic Today." I had hoped to be able to send you a copy of the "Library Bill of Rights," but have been unable to locate one without having it copied. I believe your librarian could find a copy in library literature.

With all good wishes, I am
Sincerely yours,

THEODORE E. GOULEY
Librarian

Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.
March 23, 1950
Mr. Russell W. Davis
2101 Exchange Avenue
Bartlesville, Okla.

Dear Mr. Davis:
This will acknowledge your letter of March 13th, 1950, to former Attorney General Clark, regarding certain periodicals which it has been alleged have been placed on some sort of a suspect list.

The only lists promulgated by this Department consist of those organizations which have been designated by the Attorney General pursuant to Executive Order No. 8835 relating to the loyalty of government employees. No periodicals appear on these lists nor has this Department in any other way attempted to make any declaration as to whether any periodicals circulating freely in the United States and through the United States mails are considered by it to be subversive.

Respectfully,
For the Attorney General
JAMES M. McINERNEY
Assistant Attorney General

Wright Branch
2101 Exchange Avenue
613 N.E. 4th St.
Oklahoma City Libraries
Carnegie Library
Stark and Robinson
Oklahoma City 2, Oklahoma

April 23rd, 1950
Mr. Russell W. Davis, Chairman
Board of Directors
Bartlesville Public Library
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Davis:
In reply to your request of this date, as do most public, college, and university libraries in the country, we do receive and preserve the files of the following magazines, and have done so since dates indicated:

"The Nation" since July, 1865

Sincerely,

CLARENCE S. PAINE
Director