

Dismissal of Bartlesville Librarian Scored by Board

By JACK HEANEY

Of The World Staff

OKLAHOMA CITY, Jan. 19—An Oklahoma Library Assn. committee today condemned as "an act of intolerance" the discharge of Miss Ruth Brown, Bartlesville librarian for 31 years, by Bartlesville officials.

Miss Brown was fired Aug. 7 on charges of insubordination after a Bartlesville citizens' committee charged the library kept subversive literature.

"We can only infer," said the library committee in its report, "that Miss Brown was unjustly and cavalierly discharged because of her private beliefs and because of her professional belief in free libraries."

SCORES CITIZENS' GROUP

The library committee said its investigation showed the Bartlesville citizens group had attacked the YWCA for carrying on a limited intra-racial program before turning on Miss Brown.

"Miss Brown advocates fair treatment for Negroes and a chance for them to have an even opportunity to advance on their own merits.

The thought naturally occurs that this was perhaps the citizens' committee's actual reason for the attack on the public library, but after the YWCA episode it adopted the device of claiming the library contained subversive writing."

The library committee reported further:

"A self-named and self-constituted citizens' committee of Bartlesville appears to have instigated the difficulty."

The subversive writings referred to were *The Nation* and *The New Republic* magazines, plus *Soviet Russia Today*.

The library group pointed out both *The Nation* and *New Republic* "have interesting and provocative points of view, and are worth exam-

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ining, while agreeing that *Soviet Russia Today* "is frankly pro-Soviet."

CITES SOVIET FALLACIES

But, the library committee pointed out, "it is a means of discovering exactly what the Soviet line of thought is and in their own words. Quite often the fallacies and mis-statements it print are so obvious in error as to be ludicrous."

In a public meeting on the issue here Thursday night, sponsored by a church group, Miss Frances Kennedy, Oklahoma City university librarian who is chairman of the committee investigating the issue, and Ralph Hudson, state librarian and president of the group, charged Miss Brown was fired "because of her personal and private beliefs."

An American Legion "Americanism" officer, Robert Porta, walked out on the meeting at that point.

The special library association committee, known as the "committee on intellectual freedom," said the Bartlesville group made its initial complaint before Bartlesville's board of commissioners Feb. 16, 1950.

OSTER ACTIONS RECALLED

The Bartlesville library board was called before the city commissioners Mar. 6, at which time "they had little opportunity, perhaps none, to state their views and opinions."

June 16, the Bartlesville city governors passed an ordinance giving them power to pass on book and periodical purchases of the library, and the authority to fire at any time the library board.

This was followed with the discharge of the library board July 10.

July 25, Miss Brown said she was called before the mayor, where she refused to answer questions concerning her personal life, unless they were in writing and her replies also could be written.

An hour after the meeting she was fired, Miss Brown said.

The committee report, while having no actual force and effect, was filed as a matter of policy and principle, Hudson explained.