

The IFLA conference

I am delighted that all correspondents to date on the IFLA 1988 issue (even Geoff Allen who is *not* an LAA member) agree with me that it is foolish to hold the IFLA Conference in Sydney in 1988 in conjunction with an LAA Conference.

At the same time, I resent the patronising tone of Mitcheson's note in the Bastille Day *Incite*. As a former Executive Officer of the LAA, I am only too well aware that its General Council is *not* infallible.

I wish to make a number of points in reply:

1. It was the W.A. Branch *not* the NSW Branch which originally offered to host IFLA. The NSW Branch sent a protest telegram to the General Council meeting at which the decision to make the invitation to IFLA was taken and this telegram was virtually ignored.

2. I consider it improper that the decision to issue the invitation to IFLA for 1988 was taken in the presence of the IFLA General Secretary. Even so, I understand that a considerable number of General Councillors voted against the issuing of the invitation and at least one asked for his dissent to be recorded.

3. The report on IFLA costs indicated a budget of at least half-a-million dollars. The proposed budget presented to General Council in March 1984 confirmed this and suggested that IFLA conference fees of some \$300 would have to be charged. This fee was for IFLA alone, included no social functions and did not include the LAA Conference. (By comparison the fee for IFLA in Munich in 1983 was \$127 and included extensive social events and numerous bus tours to distant locations.)

4. On Mitcheson's own admission (General Council Papers, Nov. 1983), the quality of papers at IFLA is very poor. Why, therefore, would anyone pay \$300 to attend the IFLA conference alone?

5. As stated earlier, IFLA in Munich received considerable public and private sponsorship. People I spoke to in Munich last year were incredulous that the LAA should have issued an invitation without being assured of *any* sponsorship.

6. Librarians of large libraries in Sydney should realise that they are likely to be called upon to provide staff both prior to and during the IFLA Conference. At Munich, the information desk was manned 9.00am to 9.00pm each day, including Saturday and Sunday by librarians from Munich libraries. These librarians were compensated for this time by their employing authorities and not paid from the Conference. In addition, there were numerous tours in which staff were involved.

7. It is still possible to withdraw the *tentative* invitation which has been issued to IFLA as the final invitation will not be presented until 1986.

8. The LAA Conference proposed for Brisbane in 1982 was postponed because of the Commonwealth Games. Why then, are we trying to hold LAA and IFLA in Sydney in 1988, the Bicentennial year?

As stated earlier, I would support a regional IFLA Conference for South East Asia and the Pacific but *not* in 1988 and not necessarily in Sydney.

I regard the current proposals for IFLA 1988 in Sydney as an inappropriate priority for an Association which is becoming increasingly irrelevant to its (decreasing) membership.

I call upon the membership to make their views known to General Council and in particular to attend the AGM in Brisbane at which a motion on this question from the ACT Branch will be debated.

Marina Garlick
Balmain

The controversy about the LAA proposing to invite IFLA to Australia in 1988 is not to be settled by telling us to 'trust our representatives' or by the truly shocking suggestion that LAA's 'international image' will suffer if members dare ask questions. (*Incite*, 14 July, 1984.) Enough letters from colleagues of stature indicate that the membership would indeed be well advised to look more searching into the proposal. If, as I have been informed, the decision to offer to host the 1988 conference was taken in the very presence of an IFLA official flown out to Australia at National Library expense, then I reject the view that 'the only concern with any validity relates to cost.' (*Ibid*) If a decision of such im-

portance was reached under these questionable circumstances, a review of the Association's decision-making processes seems called for.

Whilst I believe the decision to host a full-blown IFLA conference in 1988 is unsound — a view strongly based on information I gathered in Europe in April to June this year — I feel that the general membership of the LAA could happily support a decision to host a smaller conference of South-East Asian librarians. The question is not going to be satisfactorily resolved unless the membership can be truly confident in the way the final decision is reached, and be fully informed of the real, total costs and of what benefits are expected, not just for chief librarians of large library systems who have in any case ample chance to meet overseas librarians, but for a broad cross-section of the LAA membership. I cannot believe that the present handling of the matter (and by implication of considerable amounts of money) is going to win back the growing number of former members or attract many new applicants.

R.L. Cope

I have formed no view on whether the LAA should or should not host an IFLA conference in 1988. I have, however, very strong views on the sentiments expressed in Barrie Mitcheson's front page contribution to *Incite* for 14 July.

Previous letters critical of the General Council's decision to host IFLA have certainly aroused my interest. I thought that they would bring forth from the Executive lively and reasoned defence, maybe a draft budget and some other effective p.r. I did not expect a totalitarian blast from a past president. Come off it, Barrie, LAA members are colleagues of the Executive and General Council, not their serfs.

The assumptions in Barrie's letter worry me much more than the objections of the critics. Along with freedom of speech, the laws of supply and demand must be suspended. Delegates will come whatever the price! And apparently no former LAA staff member may ever dissent from any General Council decision.

If the IFLA conference, like all other matters, is in the very best hands, could the Executive please use *Incite* to allow us all opportunity to share this conviction. Such reassurance is not conveyed through bullying, as even Mrs Thatcher seems to be discovering.

Carmel Maguire

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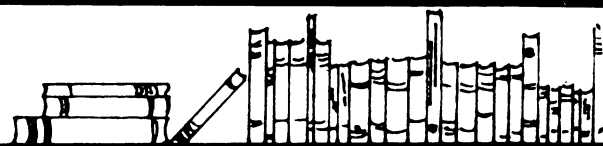
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At the recent meeting of the LAA International Relations Committee, the Committee, noting the recent correspondence in *InCite*, resolved that I should write to you expressing publicly our support for the holding of the 1988 IFLA Conference in Australia.

The Committee has consistently supported the holding of the Congress in Australia. Members of the Committee served on the Interim IFLA Committee, which recommended it. We believe that by bringing so many librarians from overseas, we give a large number of Australian librarians the opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with colleagues from many types of libraries and services from so many countries. We also believe that it will give the opportunity for Australian librarianship and its considerable achievements to be on view to the world in our Bicentennial Year.

We believe it will be of benefit to our growing involvement with the committees of IFLA, such as bibliographic control, services to the disabled, public librarianship and library schools, to name a few.

It would be appropriate to inform members that the IAML (International Association of Music Libraries), Australian Branch, noting that IFLA is to be held in Australia, has informed the Committee that, as there are several IAML and IASA (International Association of Sound Archivists) representatives on IFLA committees, that it considers it appropriate to hold the annual IAML/IASA Conference in Australia in 1988. Undoubtedly, other sectors of the Australian library community will seek the opportunity of formal or informal meetings with other IFLA and related committees.

I hope these points will assist both those who continue to support the proposition and those who are concerned by it.

Judith Baskin
Convenor

International Relations Committee

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ACHLIS, S.A. College of Advanced Education Library, 15 Lorne Ave, Magill, SA 5072.

Restrictions in WA

From October 1984, until about February 1985, disruptions to service from the J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History, the State Archives and the State Reference Library may be expected due to the planned move into the Alexander Library Building. Early warning is hereby given, so that researchers and visitors from overseas and other Australian States who may expect to use the various collections may plan ahead. Much of the material housed in annexes, especially archives, maps and newspapers, normally on a 30-hour call, may well, at different times, be unavailable for up to five weeks. The move will be staged so that the move of one collection from one area is complete before the next begins.

Although a timetable has been drawn up, changes are very likely. Those wishing to make long-term plans should contact the Battye Library or the State Reference Library when they may be supplied with the latest timetable: additionally such enquirers would be well advised to re-check closer to September 1984. When all the annexes and stack areas have been moved, the Reading Rooms and all public service points will be temporarily closed.

The precise dates of the closure will be widely advertised closer to the time of the move, but at this stage mid-January/early February appears the most likely time for full closedown of services.

Robert Sharman
State Librarian

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News is the first rough draft of history — Benjamin Bradlee

Literary witchhunts

I hesitated for some time before deciding to comment on an item which appeared in *InCite* on 15 June, referring to a working group which has been established by the Australian School Library Association "to examine materials for children for any racist content, with the aim of reporting objectionable inaccuracies to librarians, publishers and potential users".

I have noted with disquiet, the growing evidence of literary witchhunts in other countries and I now find, with alarm, that they have arrived in Australia. This is bad news. Worse news is that the move is being led by librarians, in the name of a distinguished association of librarians and is being co-ordinated by a staff member of one of our well respected schools of librarianship.

Could the LAA, on the basis of its Statement on Freedom to Read, Clause 4, which states that 'a librarian . . . should resist attempts by individuals or organized groups within the community to determine what library materials are to be, or are not to be, available to the users of the library', please dissociate itself from this project?

John McKinlay
University Librarian

For the record

Some colleagues may be aware that in February this year I took up the position of Special Assistant to the Principal, Equal Employment Opportunity, at this College.

This was a three-quarter-time commitment, on a two-year-secondment basis, and I maintained a teaching role within the School of Information Studies.

There was, unfortunately, an industrial dispute over my being an academic while in the E.E.O. job. Eventually I took the decision to resign from that involvement, and in April I resumed full-time teaching.

Because of my relative geographical isolation it has not been possible for me to ensure that colleagues were aware of the facts regarding this situation, hence this letter.

The E.E.O. experience, which extended throughout most of the two years I was chairing this College's Staff Development Committee, has certainly been a radicalising one.

Helen M. Modra
Lecturer

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