

South African Sanctions?

I would like to suggest to fellow librarians that they look at their loans trade with South Africa or its embassies and consider if they should take restrictive action. In particular, in the area of weapons research. You may be in favour of a free flow of information, but what if the direct consequence is facilitating death in the townships of South Africa or its neighbour countries? The rapid growth of SA's arms industry depends to a significant extent on use of international research literature. Librarians have a real chance of restricting access to this material.

Supplying such documents is also arguably a contravention of UN Security Council Resolution 418 (1977), the mandatory arms embargo adhered to by most western countries. It certainly contravenes the spirit and intention of the resolution which recognises that the em-

bargo 'must be strengthened and universally applied without any reservations and qualifications whatsoever . . . ' as a preamble to its decision 'that all states shall cease forthwith any provision to South Africa of arms and related material of all types . . . '.

Several options are open to those concerned: to quietly mislay requests; to privately inform requesters that specific items will not be provided; to work for institutional policies on screened loans or no loans to South Africa; to introduce the topic into academic boycott plans; and to work at political levels for national policies for national or state libraries.

If you have qualms over censorship accusations, bear in mind that restricting loans is not total denial of access; that most black South Africans have no access to your literature at all; that it is fitting that the highly restrictive and censorious SA government should face a rebuff of this sort; and that freedom of information laws and practices should protect individuals from the state rather than help governments to suppress individuals.

Jeff Leewenburg
Brighton, Melbourne, Vic.

Professional concern

The Committee of the National Special Libraries Section discussed the column — 'the bottom line', by Ian McCallum, published in *InCite*, 6 June 1986 at our recent meeting.

Whilst the committee has taken the view

that he was probably writing 'tongue in cheek' in the hope of eliciting comment from the membership at large, we found the content of the article rather alarming. Given that *InCite* is publicly available and no doubt read by no members of the LAA, including library employers who can be expected to believe the views expressed by the President at least reflect Association policy, the article is most disturbing. We believe that the article may cause a great deal of confusion among these employers and difficulty for librarians in upholding their position and salaries relative to library technicians.

Coming as it does so soon after distribution for comment of the Draft Statement of Library Appointments where the roles of Librarian and Library Technicians are clearly stated as being different, how can that statement now be presented as LAA policy!

Judging by the response from Branches and other groups included in the General Council Agenda papers for the June meeting and our own Section comments (which were not, incidentally, included) it is quite apparent that the distinction is relevant and can be considered to be a reflection of membership thinking on the matter.

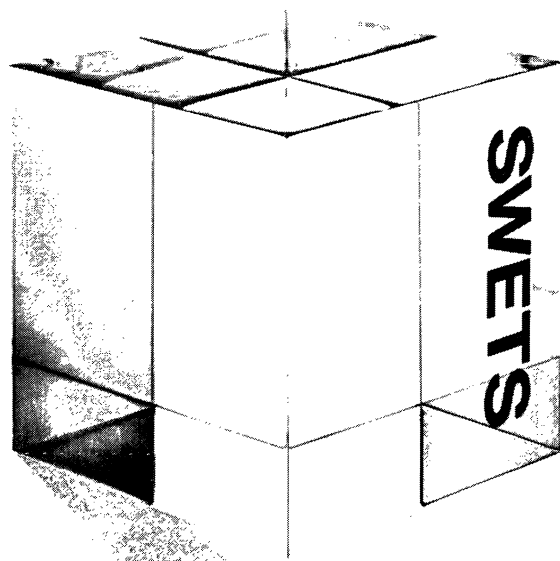
A simple examination of the educational requirements for qualification by the two groups is sufficient to indicate the differing career path expectations applicable to each and we believe that there should be two categories of Professional Membership — Professional Librarians and (Professional ie qualified Library Technicians.

We do not seek in any way to denigrate or belittle the work of technicians. Most of us are only too well aware of the invaluable contribution that library technicians make in the provision of an efficient and effective library service. We do insist, however, that there must be demonstrated in public statements issued from the LAA a consistent stand in this and any other matter where individual librarians must deal with employers.

Mrs J Korn
President

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RSVP — 7 August 1986