

ADL tried to censor anti-Israel books

by Jeffrey Steinberg

It's bad enough that the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL) has been caught spying on tens of thousands of American citizens simply because they criticize the policies of the governments of Israel and South Africa or oppose the ADL's brand of New Age values. But evidence has now emerged that for years the ADL has been exerting awesome behind-the-scenes pressure to censor the books you read and the courses taught in America's colleges and universities.

In June, the annual convention of the American Library Association (ALA), which took place in New Orleans, was the scene of an arm-twisting effort that would have made the most manipulative Capitol Hill lobbyist drool with envy. According to a recent article in the *Village Voice* by investigative reporter Robert I. Friedman, the ALA convention was descended upon by an army of ADL and Hadassah activists. Their mission: to overturn an earlier ALA resolution denouncing the government of Israel for censorship in the Occupied Territories. Under Israeli law, a wide variety of books are outlawed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including, ironically, an autobiography by Israel's current President, Ezer Weizman.

David Williams, a 1960s campus radical who is now a research librarian with the Chicago Public Library, had introduced the resolution at last year's ALA event, and it won the support of the majority of delegates, who responded with appropriate moral indignation at the evidence that Israel prohibits the reading of a wide range of material inside the occupied lands.

Williams landed on the ADL's enemies list several years ago, according to author Friedman, when he prepared a bibliography on the Middle East for the Chicago Public Library, which included several tracts that the ADL thought-police considered too favorable to the Palestinian cause. Pretty soon, Chicago aldermen, city library officials, and even the mayor's office began to be flooded with complaints about Williams. Initially, the city's chief librarian responded by submitting Williams's bibliography to other impartial experts for review. They gave their enthusiastic endorsement to Williams's work, praising it for its balance and its scholarship. But the ADL continued to escalate the pressure, threatening to cut off funds from the Jewish community for certain important city projects. Eventually, Williams was forced to re-write the bibliography, adding a number of books hand-picked by the ADL.

At New Orleans, the ADL-Hadassah hit-squads, drawing upon the local Zionist community, hosted a series of private meetings with top ALA officials on the eve of the vote, and deployed scores of true believers onto the convention floor. The result was a repeal of the anti-Israel censorship resolution.

The ADL-led effort to impose Zionist lobby censorship over the American library system may have succeeded in the short run, but it is sure to be a pyrrhic victory. The quiet anger that the ADL strong-arm tactics reportedly engendered among the ALA convention-goers will not be forgotten. It's yet one more example of how the ADL serves as a wellspring for instigating anti-semitism where it doesn't exist, because its victims mistakenly believe this masonic organization to represent the Jewish community.

Campus thought-police

A similar situation has been going on for years on the American university and college campuses, according to a complaint filed several years ago with the American Association of University Professors. The complaint was filed on behalf of a number of liberal professors—many of them Jewish—who found themselves targeted for job loss, physical intimidation, and blackballing from academic publishing houses by the ADL and the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The complaint, filed by noted human rights activist Dr. Francis Boyle, cited ADL and AIPAC documents singling out a number of academics and organizations who favored solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that were unacceptable to the ADL, AIPAC, and the Likud government then in power in Israel.

According to the lengthy documentary packet, professors found themselves under surveillance inside their own classrooms by students affiliated and deployed by the ADL and AIPAC. In some instances, professors were physically threatened, classrooms were picketed. In other instances, where professors were in line for tenure, university presidents were visited by alumni who were ADL and AIPAC members and threatened with loss of financial support unless the targeted teachers were dumped.

But when the AAUP ethics committee took up the impressively documented complaint, they, too, caved in to pressure from within their own ranks by ADL and AIPAC allies. No action was taken against the two powerful Zionist lobby groups; whereas a similar case involving a conservative outfit called Accuracy in Education, which was accused of using similar intimidation tactics against certain liberal professors, resulted in sharp AAUP sanctions and loud public denunciations by the academic freedom watchdogs.

In his *Village Voice* exposé, Robert Friedman also added his voice to the growing chorus of critics who are horrified that the ADL's dirty tricks are protected by the Internal Revenue Service, which has provided the ADL with tax-exempt status for decades. The time is indeed ripe for a full-scale IRS investigation of the ADL.