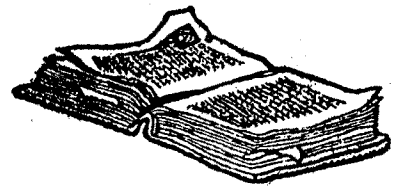


May 21, 2004



"Letters to the Editor"
Library Journal
360 Park Avenue South (13th floor)
New York, NY 10010

Dear Colleagues,

John N. Berry ("Don't be muzzled by fears about your job or your career," 5-15-04) has been lucky. Despite being "controversial," he survived. Even prospered. However, as documented by Stephen Carney in the Fall 2003 Journal of Information Ethics ("Democratic communication and the library as workplace," pages 43-59) and by me in Unabashed Librarian, no. 125 ("Not in my library!," pages 17-23) and "Inside" censorship ("Workplace repression," sanfordberman.org), many of our colleagues are not so lucky.

A firm AIA commitment to free speech in the workplace would surely help to unmuzzle otherwise fearful library staff. In 1999, such a formal commitment was proposed as an amendment to the Library Bill of Rights, but was referred by AIA Council to the oblivion of the Ethics Committee. Perhaps now, in 2004, it's time to resurrect that affirmation of free speech not just for writers, artists, and performers, but also for US. So here's a draft "Resolution on Workplace Speech" that hopefully circumvents the qualms concerning changes to LBR:

WHEREAS the American Library Association is firmly committed to fostering human rights and freedom of expression (Policies 53 and 58.4.1); and

WHEREAS candid, robust debate is essential to the making of sound policy; and

WHEREAS library staff do not universally enjoy the right to openly discuss library and professional issues without fear of reprisal;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AIA Council amends Policy 54 (Library Personnel Practices) by adding:

54.21 Workplace speech

Libraries should permit and encourage the full and free expression of views by staff on professional and policy matters.

An ED editorial endorsement would be most welcome.

With heartiest greetings,

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ELEMENT IN SOCIETY
IS IGNORANCE
• EMMA GOLDMAN •