



Social Responsibilities Round Table Newsletter ALA

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A Challenging Perspective on Contemporary Psychiatry: An
Interview with Leonard Roy Frank

by Doris Kirschbaum

"'Mental illness' is a pejorative label used to justify the social control of selected individuals through involuntary psychiatric interventions. Those affected are troubled or troublesome people who have not violated any laws and therefore cannot be criminally prosecuted and imprisoned, but whose ideas and actions, values and life styles, threaten established power relationships within the family, the community, or society in general." Leonard Roy Frank

The task forces within SRRT reflect a concern for the oppressed minorities in our society. Leonard Roy Frank, activist in the psychiatric inmates liberation movement, believes that the so-called "mentally ill," are society's most silenced and brutalized minority.

In 1962-63, for a period of eight months, Frank was involuntarily committed to a psychiatric facility and underwent a combination of 50 insulin coma and 35 electroconvulsive treatments. For six years after his release, he read and studied in order to regain the knowledge that he believes had been destroyed by the shock treatments. In 1972, he joined the staff of "Madness Network News," an alternative publication, and thus began his protest against the oppression of psychiatric inmates and others who fall within the control of the psychiatric establishment. Two years later, he and a friend, Wade Hudson, co-founded the Network Against Psychiatric Assault (NAPA), an organization which they felt could be effective as a political weapon in the fight against involuntary commitment.

(cont'd on p.

INSIDE:

ALA/SRRT Midwinter Schedule, p.4

Small Press: The Future of Literature, p.5

Peace, p.7

One of the really encouraging developments in the "mental health" field over the last decade, Frank believes, has been the emergence of the psychiatric inmates liberation movement. A number of former inmates felt that since they could not rely on others either to liberate those who were still in psychiatric facilities or eliminate the risk to themselves of being forced back into them, they would have to do it on their own. Today, there are about 25 separate organizations in the United States and a similar number in Europe. They are made up primarily, or exclusively, in some cases, of present and former psychiatric inmates who are working not only to make the public aware of the abuses inherent in the involuntary psychiatric system but are also trying to come up with alternatives to the system.

Current commitment laws provide for the detention and treatment of people said to be dangerous or disabled by reason of "mental illness." Frank believes that people should not be deprived of their freedom unless they have been convicted of committing a crime. Violating the person or property of others should be dealt with through the criminal justice system, but so long as they're not breaking the law, people should have the right to violate the mores of society. Involuntary psychiatric commitment is preventive detention - a practice which all freedom loving people find abhorrent.

Everyone recognizes that people have difficulties from time to time but those in the liberation movement believe they are human difficulties, not psychiatric ones requiring psychiatric solutions. Initially, they are trying to develop alternative concepts so that the problem will not be identified in psychiatric terms, and they are working to dispel the myth of psychiatry as a science.

Since their introduction in 1953, anti-psychotic drugs, also known as the "major tranquilizers," have become the most widely used psychiatric technique of social control. They are cheap for the institutions that use them, convenient and time-saving for the psychiatrists who administer them, profitable to the companies that manufacture them, and comforting to the families of the inmates because they appear to alleviate symptoms when, in reality, what they do, is blunt people's awareness of their true personal and social situation and reduce their ability to do anything about it.

Ultimately, the liberation movement hopes to have democratically based facilities whose rules and regulations are determined by the residents rather than professional experts, who are not so much in sympathy with the people being held in these institutions, as they are interested in perpetuating the system because their jobs are dependent upon it. They also favor the setting up of self-help, mutual-support groups for people in similar circumstances to get together in friendship and to share among themselves the different kinds of approaches to problem-solving they've tried. They want to work with other groups in our society that regard themselves as politically disadvantaged, believing that only through such cooperative effort will needed social change be brought about.

What is the responsibility of the library profession? We can make available as wide a variety of views as possible. This is especially necessary in fields such as psychiatry, where there is a paucity of public controversy. Books critical of psychiatry exist, but not only do they need to be broadly distributed, they need to be cataloged under subject headings such as "anti-psychiatry." By purchasing books and newsletters listed in the accompanying bibliography and by ordering from sources such as Alternatives-in-Print, as well as from the more traditional sources, librarians could provide an invaluable service to the community. We can question the practice of keeping the professional libraries in institutions as an information source for the staff but not for the inmates who have no other reliable information sources and who might benefit from learning as much as they can about their rights, alternative approaches to their problems, and the nature of the treatments they are undergoing with or without their informed consent. We can offer to patrons, through information and referral files, alternatives to traditional psychiatric agencies by providing information on self-help groups active within the community. The illegitimate power of psychiatry is enormous and growing. In the interest of everyone's freedom this power needs to be checked. Whenever we participate in the advocacy of freedom for others, we contribute to our own.

Coming in next issue:

Criticism of Psychiatry: Recommending Reading, by Leonard Roy Frank

ALA MIDWINTER MEETING - DENVER, COLORADO - JANUARY 23-28, 1982

Skeleton Schedule of Events Approved by ALA Executive Board at 1981 Spring Meeting

DATE	8-9 AM	9:30-11 AM	11:30 AM-12:30 PM	LUNCHEON	2-4 PM	4:30-5:30 PM	DINNER	8-10 PM
FRIDAY January 22 (preliminary meetings)		ALA Registration Opens 10:00			ALA Offices Open 3:00			Conetta tentative
SATURDAY January 23	Executive Board 9:00 PIE	Executive Board	Union		COPES/PBA ALA Exhibits Open 4:00-7:00 p.m.	Feminist		AC
SUNDAY January 24	PIE			ALA Exhibits Open 11:	Feminist	EMIE		Appts. Com./ 1983 Los Angeles Conf. Prog. Com.
MONDAY January 25	COUNCIL I 9:00 PIE	COUNCIL I	AC	ALA Exhibits Open 11:	AIP	EMIE PIE		1982 Philadelphia Conf. Prog. Com.
TUESDAY January 26	COUNCIL II 9:00	COUNCIL II	Feminist	ALA Exhibits Open 11:	Tools	UNION		
WEDNESDAY January 27	Executive Board 9:00	Ad Hoc Comm on Ku Klux Klan	AC		COUNCIL III	COUNCIL III		
THURSDAY January 28	Executive Board 9:00	Executive Board	Union		ALA Offices Close 1:00			

MC - June 9, 1981

NOTE: Day and time slot for President's Program to be determined at a later date.

PIE = Peace Information Exchange
 EMIE = Ethnic Materials Info Exchange
 Tools = Tools for Consciousness-Raising
 AIP = Alternatives in Print

≡ AC = SRRT Action Council
 no other SRRT meetings

//// SRRT Task Force meeting

approved

Small Press:

MID-CONTINENT FORUM
FOR THE
FUTURE OF LITERATURE
October 3-5, 1981, University of Minnesota

The Forum was a three-day conference to bring together those people interested in the future of literature, to assess needs and concerns, and to create a forum for dialogue about contemporary literature. The idea for the conference was the result of a meeting held after the Great Midwestern Bookshow. The following is an excerpt from the Conference Prospectus.

The unprecedented growth in the last ten years of literary and related activities has been due in large part to governmental funding. Money sources can have, and perhaps have had, an effect on what is published, what reaches a readership, and in some cases, what is written. Decisions about who receives funding are made by panels and boards comprised of individuals who are usually concerned with the literary health of an area. The few private foundations willing to support literary activities usually follow the governmental process in awarding grants. Most foundations that support the arts do not feel their staff and boards competent to make decisions in the field of literature. Thus dependency on governmental funding has continued to grow. That is, until now. Budgets of arts agencies are being cut.

One group that met at the Forum was the Librarians Group. Here is their report.

Preamble

We believe that libraries should collect and promote small and alternative press materials

- because small press and alternative materials provide new, useful, exciting, and wholly independent viewpoints and approaches.
- because libraries have an obligation to both nourish and represent local (as well as national and even global) arts and other forms of human thought and creativity.
- because people in a democratic, pluralistic society, in order to make wise decisions and to satisfy legitimate personal or group needs, require access to a greater variety and higher quality of information and ideas than what the Conglomerate Media furnish.
- because it's the library's responsibility to preserve the full gamut of local cultural, social, and political activity--as expressed in both print and A/V materials--for later generations.
- because a true commitment to intellectual freedom demands that libraries stock genuinely diverse opinion and genres.

Identifying, selecting and ordering materials

We recommend that:

1. Regional libraries systematically collect and preserve materials produced, published, or written within that region, and that this goal be adopted by the Council of Regional Library Directors.
2. The Minnesota Library Association or Office of Public Libraries and Inter-Library Cooperation fund or publish a Minnesota small press and alternative media directory, to be updated periodically, Minnesota librarians being responsible for reporting new materials and producers in their areas.
3. Another distributor (e.g., Bookslinger) assume the marketing role of Plains Distribution Service, whose demise we regret.



- p. 6
4. The proposed Writers' Society or a similar agency publish a Minnesota small press review-and-bibliography journal.
 5. MLA, the American Library Association, and other groups provide free exhibit space at annual conferences for small and alternative non-profit producers and distributors, these to be selected or invited by a Literary Round Table or some other appropriate body.

Education for Librarians

We recommend that:

1. Library school regular and continuing education curricula immediately include segments on the independent press, the national trend toward publishing conglomerates, and the increasing manipulation of reading tastes.
2. OPLIC, in conjunction with the writing and publishing community, conduct small press workshops throughout the state.
3. Library schools sponsor a colloquium on small press publishing in Minnesota, the proceedings to be published.
4. MLA and MEMO (the Minnesota Educational Media Organization) undertake ongoing conference programs featuring Minnesota publishers, writers, booksellers, artists, filmmakers, musicians, and distributors.

Creating a demand for small press materials among library users

We recommend that:

1. User surveys be employed to identify community needs for small press materials.
2. Community awareness of small press materials be promoted by readings, special displays and shelving, booklists, and other means, developed in cooperation with local educational and cultural agencies.

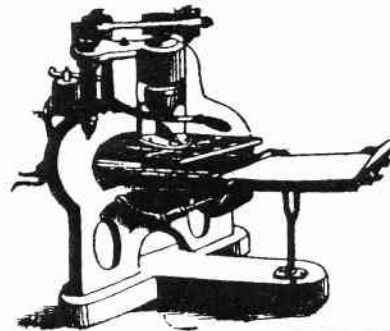
Technological constraints

We recommend that the library community recognize and address the limitations imposed by today's technology on the selection, acquisition, cataloging, and processing of small press materials.

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10-4-81



THE SRRT NEWSLETTER

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Working groups under IFLA have limited lives, and therefore it was essential in the year of renewal that the IFLA meeting at Leipzig be attended, and a good number of Americans were there for all the right reasons. Elizabeth Morrissett requested renewal of the Working Group on Conflict Management and Peace Information, and there was warm support. A budget of 50 British pounds was voted for postage. The question was raised: "What have you done during the first three years?" It is hard to answer--foreign postage is expensive, and it takes a lot of letters to find the people who would like to join a working group. There are so very few "peace" librarians and libraries, and they are not rich.

And so the group must depend on correspondence, to a greater degree than some of the special library exchanges which are commercially advantageous. I would suggest that peace is commercially advantageous, but has not been sufficiently sold to the bankers.

The meeting of the Working Group next year in Montreal will have a program and exhibits of materials. Since it is within the area some U.S. librarians can afford to visit, since Montreal is perfectly delightful, and since the meeting is "open" and everyone is invited to attend and discover international librarianship, SRRT members are urged to consider attending this year.

Commission on U.S. Peace Academy Proposals Delivers Final Report

President Reagan and members of Congress, and others received the final report of the Commission on Proposals for the National Academy of Peace and Conflict Resolution during the week of October 19, 1981.

In the final report, the U.S. Academy of Peace is designed not to intervene in disputes, not be a policy body and not compete with existing institutions but focus on causes of war, elements of peace, the study of international conflicts and their resolution in the **past**. It will respond to concerns by Congress and the Administration as a source of information. It is not intended to compete with, speak for, or be a barrier to expressions of concern by business, labor, government, religious, international or educational groups.

It is recommended that it be a federally-created, non-profit, independent corporation which would have some funds from the U.S. appropriations, but also be free to solicit private support. Its offices would be in Washington D.C. but it would develop outreach and extension programs to serve people throughout the country, providing graduate and post-graduate programs, training workshops and other services aimed toward developing and improving conflict resolution skills. It would support and conduct research and publish information based on these findings.

It is proposed that a medal of peace be presented annually by the President of the United States. It is recommended that an international peace center be established within the Peace Academy in which leaders from this nation and others would be appointed to study. The conclusion that a federal investment in peace learning is necessary to stimulate a broad range of government, private and voluntary activities in international peace was reached in the process of meeting for over a year, and with the input of the many hearings.

The final report is now available from the Superintendent of Documents (stock order number 065-000-OLL6-1), U.S. Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, \$6.50.

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