Introduction
It is a pleasure to share this podium with such an illustrious panel. We have had an introduction to what constitutes Holocaust Denial literature. As librarians, we must now come to grips with the question, what do we do with it. As the only librarian on the panel, I shall address this issue on the basis of my personal experience in our library.

Since its inception in 1977, the Wiesenthal Center Library has had to cope with Holocaust Denial, Antisemitica, and other similar genres of literature. On my first day of work, I was handed two cartons of books and told to make a library. As I perused the fifty books given to me, I suddenly realized that it was not going to be a simple task. There was The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945 by Lucy Dawidowicz (NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), and a number of other basic Holocaust texts; however, there was also a copy of The Hoax of the Twentieth Century by Arthur Butz (Torrance, CA: Institute for Historical Review, 1976).

From that day on, we daily wrestle with the questions: How do we handle it? What do we do with it? What are our obligations to the public?

The focus of my remarks is on the literature which revises and denies the Holocaust; however, PLO propaganda materials, “Zionism is Racism;” and Antisemitica are only a few of the additional subject areas which would need similar decisions, and we have applied some of the same parameters discussed below to our holdings on these topics.

Also, denial of the Holocaust is not the only Holocaust material treated this way. It may surprise you to learn that there is Holocaust pornography—anti-Nazi and extensively illustrated. We handle these materials in a similar way. Perhaps you will find other areas where these ideas can be applied.

My remarks shall be as specific and as practical as possible. Throughout every decision, there is a primary concern for the public we serve.

Assumptions
In order to best understand the topic given to us, we must consider what is probably the most important word in the title of today’s session. The title reads: “Controversial materials in a Jewish library.” It is the adjective “Jewish,” in this case, which sets us apart from the academic community to classify these materials and to provide subject cataloging for them which honestly identifies them for what they are. In public institutions, as well, there have been recent efforts to distinguish between authentic Holocaust historiography and Holocaust Revisionism and denial; e.g., The Library of Congress has now drawn that distinction with the designation of the subject heading HOLOCAUST, JEWISH, 1939–1945—ERRORS, INVENTIONS, ETC. (This is discussed further below.)

Acquisition of the Materials
It is essential when dealing with controversial matters to know the other side’s views. Knowing the enemy and/or the opposing view is crucial to one’s understanding of the subject. In fact, it frequently strengthens...
your conviction in the justness of your own cause. Given this premise, should Holocaust denial and revisionist materials be purchased and/or accepted for your library? How do we provide the information needed by the research public? This question is particularly crucial since we live in an age of diminishing philanthropy, and none of us has been granted an unlimited library budget.

There has to be a repository for these materials from which they are available for research, but not every library needs to specialize in everything. We have institutions which, by their mandate, are committed to the monitoring of specific organizations, their activities, and their publications. The Library/Archives of the Wiesenthal Center has decided that this will be one of its areas of specialization.

The Wiesenthal Center regularly monitors the activities of a number of organizations of the radical right, as well as of those that deny the Holocaust or its magnitude. This is done by subscription to a number of the basic publications of these organizations and by listening to their telephone recorded propaganda, e.g., David McCalden's recorded message, which is changed weekly (213-640-2006).

The Wiesenthal Library/Archives not only monitors and collects; in addition, its library and research staffs are available to provide reference assistance, guidance, and interlibrary loan services to other libraries. To whatever extent we are able, we are willing to provide the kind of service which will obviate the need for every library to collect most of Holocaust denial literature. The saved dollars can easily find other projects for investment.

Cataloging and Classification

What are my suggestions to you for handling these materials? How do we catalog them? Many libraries happen on to these materials. It may be important to retain a sampling of Holocaust denial literature for educational purposes, even though you will not develop a research collection in the field. In any case, there must be decisions on classification, subject headings, circulation, and control.

All of my suggestions in this area have been tried, experimented with, and revised in our field. In any case, there must be decisions to provide the kind of service which will obviate the need for every library to collect most of Holocaust denial literature. The saved dollars can easily find other projects for investment.

Our second step in this process is classification into our Special Collections. All of Special Collections are housed in our closed stack area, but are, nonetheless, retrievable through the central card catalog in the library. A patron may retrieve something from Special Collections for research by submitting a call slip to a library staff member who will then obtain it. These policies accomplish several important goals:

1. They assure the availability of the materials for researchers.
2. They clearly identify the materials for what they are, without misleading the public or giving credibility to that which contradicts historical fact.
3. They exert a certain level of control, i.e.:
   a. The materials are less likely to disappear.
   b. The staff can use its discretion in distribution.

You must be thinking: "This is censorship." I don't really think so. Everyday with every patron, you, the librarian make such decisions when you assist them. Would you give Raoul Hilberg's The Destruction of the European Jews (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961; Rev. ed. NY: Holmes & Meier, 1986) or Lucy Dawidowicz' The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945 (Rev. ed. NY: Free Press, 1986) to a ten-year-old child who might have read The Diary of Anne Frank (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967)? On the other hand, would you give Milton Meltzer's book, Never to Forget (NY: Harper & Row, 1976) to a graduate student?

Our library's patrons cover the entire spectrum from school-age children to college faculty and researchers. We are happy with our decision to keep these aspects of our collection in their proper perspective. This, however, does not mean that you will not wrestle with yourself each time you make a decision.

Recently a thirteen-year-old girl came in and said she was writing a paper on Holocaust Revisionism. We gave her the phone number noted above so that she could listen to the recorded message. Beyond that, however, we gave her only secondary source material. I did not feel that I was censoring her reading because I chose not to acquaint her with the sophisticated primary source materials in Special Collections.

Young people have to be given materials that they are ready for and capable of handling. This is a tremendous responsibility which is carried by the librarian. The decisions are not easy, but we must measure up to the responsibility.

To illustrate the naivete of young people, and to emphasize the inherent danger in material of this type, allow me to share with you an experience I had with a group of senior high-school girls. (Primary in the mandate of the Simon Wiesenthal Center is education. We periodically bring school groups into the library to explore the resources of a particular topic.) I decided to expose this group of girls—all Jewish, and of above average intelligence—to the Journal of Historical Review, the slick, academic, intellectual journal, published by the Institute for Historical Review.

There were about ten girls, juniors and seniors. I distributed copies of the Journal of Historical Review, which none of them had ever seen and asked them to pretend that they were in my position and had to make a decision as to whether or not the library should subscribe to this journal. Each group of two girls was assigned a different issue; they had as full a spectrum as was possible. I gave the girls a variety of guidelines, suggesting that they look at the editorial board and at the physical format of the magazine, and that they read the beginnings and the endings of a few articles. After giving them about fifteen minutes to jot down a few notes on their reactions to the magazine, we then discussed their feelings. Throughout our discussion, not one single girl detected the denial of the Holocaust, revision or distortion of Holocaust history, or antisemitism.

Finally, one girl said that there's an article on The Diary of Anne Frank, indicating the journal's importance as Holocaust literature. Taking the issue in question, I showed them where the article appeared. They had seen the title at the top of the page which read "The Diary of Anne Frank." There were two lines between the title and the first paragraph. The second of the two lines contained the name of the author, which was probably not familiar to them; however, in tiny print between the title and the author's name, was a subtitle which they had missed. The subtitle read: "A Hoax." Not one of the girls picked up the subtitle or its significance.

I have conducted similar workshops with other groups of students and adults. If this is the result with college-bound Jewish students, you can surmise what happens with...
groups of students who do not have the kind of educational background that these girls have. Experiences like this convince me that we made the right decision to segregate these materials.

Circulation

Special Collections at the Wiesenthal Center are non-circulating; however, we will, under special circumstances, circulate in person and through interlibrary loan. To facilitate this type of decision-making, we restrict access to our Special Collections and Rare Books to those daytime hours when the professional staff is available.

Photocopying is an aid in this area as well, and we do permit photocopying of these materials. There is a sign at the copy machine regarding copyright law and infringement. In addition we have a form, that is signed by the patron, indicating that the library assumes no responsibility for copyright clearance. This form is particularly important when pictures are involved. Such a signed document protects the library and its parent institution from problems of copyright infringement.

Staff Awareness

How can library staff intelligently answer the questions of patrons on Holocaust denial? We all have an obligation to familiarize ourselves with the subject—its philosophy, major proponents or personalities, key publications, journals, and newspapers. Even though a library does not have all these materials, the staff must still assist the public. Moreover, not having to catalog Holocaust revisionist books does not excuse one from the obligation to be aware of appropriate classification and subject headings. To summarize: as librarians, you do not have to know all of the answers; you must be able to intelligently assist your patrons in finding the answers. With this kind of personal assistance, with an understanding of the material, with an attempt to catalog and process materials so that they are retrievable and used but not abused, we can prevent intellectual freedom from becoming intellectual license.

Notes

1 Until now, the class number assigned has been 880.4.4, the general number for the Holocaust, except for works that deal with a specific aspect of the Holocaust. We are currently negotiating with the Library of Congress to establish a special class number for Holocaust denial literature.

2 Both primary and secondary sources—i.e., Holocaust denial literature and works about it—are assigned this subject heading. We hope that the Library of Congress will eventually differentiate these two categories in its subject cataloging.

Appendix

Holocaust Revisionism: A Selected Bibliography of English-Language Publications


Roth, Heinz. *Why are We Being Lied To?* Witten, West Germany: Refo-Druck Verlag, 1975.


Adaire Klein is Coordinator of Library and Archival Services at the Simon Wiesenthal Center and Librarian of Yeshiva University of Los Angeles, CA.
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