

# Reports of a Major Drive for Censorship

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## Chicago

America's public libraries and schools are facing a massive new wave of censorship in the wake of November 4 conservative election victories, the director of the American Library Association's office for intellectual freedom said recently.

An upswing in attempts to censor books began just prior to the election and is continuing, said Judith F. Krug, whose office here is a clearing house for censorship incidents involving libraries and school reading programs.

"My phone has been ringing off the hook," Krug said. "It is the beginning of a major assault" on

the ability of libraries and schools to maintain free access to diverse materials representing all political, social and economic viewpoints covering the spectrum of social problems and lifestyles.

As evidence, Krug cited some of the cases that have crossed her desk in the last two weeks:

- In Statesville, N.C., a man claiming to represent the Moral Majority has complained to the North Carolina Department of Education about the use of "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley in a high school course. The book, the man said in his written complaint, "continues the degradation of the moral

character of our youth (by advocating drug culture and blaspheming God." The book, the complaint said, "would make a good bonfire."

- In Wapakoneta, Ohio, the parents of one 10th grade student are seeking to have Ken Kesey's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" banned from the high school curriculum because, as the parents told the local school board, "the book is filth."

- In Abington, Va., the Washington County Library is under pressure from a local fundamentalist minister to remove all books by Harold Robbins and Sydney Sheldon. The minister, who led a

successful campaign to have the creationist theory added to local biology course curriculum along with the teaching of evolution, considers books by the two authors as pornographic. Originally he asked only that Sheldon's "Bloodline" and Robbins' "Memories of Another Day" be removed from the shelves. The minister also wants lists of everybody who has checked out the two books. The local librarian, Kathy Russell, is resisting, Krug said.

While there has been a growing trend of censorship nationwide for several years — more than 300 cases were reported to the office for intellectual freedom last year

alone — Krug said she feared that the greatest challenge was just beginning.

"All of the pressures that were just below the surface are now coming out, pressures to remove those materials that people object to on moral grounds or because they believe the materials do not reflect 'traditional American values,'" Krug said.

These pressures are coming from "people who believe that now that they have elected their man (Ronald Reagan) to the White House and because they now control the Senate that our society is (going to be) willing to superimpose their

(conservative) values on the entire nation. Suddenly they perceive they have a mandate," Krug said.

Established conservative groups and such new groups as the so-called Christian Right and New Right, along with single-issue organizations and both feminist and anti-feminist groups, pose the greatest threats to library collections, said Krug, who is also executive director of the Freedom To Read Foundation that provides legal, financial and educational support to libraries, librarians and schools involved in censorship controversies.

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