

To: The Library Committee members From: The Librarian

Mazimbu Mazimbu

6 August 1990

Re: Librarx Committee Meeting

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The Library Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Thyre&5y,,9th August, at 3 p.m. in the Board Room. The agenda stands as follows:

- 1) Opening the meeting
- 2) Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising
- 3) Librarian's report
- 4) Book selection
- 5) Contact with SA librarians
- 6) Closing the meeting

Hoping you will be able to attend the meeting,

In the Year of Peoples' Action for a Bemocratic South Africa,

Mar'atta Lahti

Librarian

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Finland 12 July 1990

Dear Marjatta

I was very excited to receive two days ago your letter dated 8 June 1990. It was good to hear that you had found my article "In a State of Emergency" interesting, and I am taking the liberty of including a couple more papers on the South African situation which you might find of use.

It was very interesting to hear about your work at Somafo Library to supplement what I have already heard from Nonkululeko Woko. I am sure your work will be much admired by the progressive librarians of South Africa (of whom there are more than one had imagined). We are also grateful for the efforts you have made internationally to explain the situation for libraries and librarians in South Africa. There should be a progressive contingent from within SA at the Stockholm gathering.

The new association is to be launched in Durban this Saturday. While I am confident that the proceedings will be worthwhile, it seems that one or two small tactical errors may have been made and we may find ourselves launching a Natal-based organization rather than a national one. Other regions could set up structures and a national body could emerge like that. At present the name of the new organization is LIWOSA - Library and Information Workers Organization of South Africa. The new journal is called Innovation i appropriate library gag information work in southern Africa. We have been delayed in the production of the first issue, but are now undertaking the editorial work. The editorial collective is an independent grouping based in Pietermaritzburg.

I too hope that we establish a relationship with the ANC.

However, things have not got off to a very good start. Cde Barbara Masekela had promised to speak at the LIWOSA launch, but pulled out four days beforehand. Although we have her speech and it will be read for her, her presence as a keynote speaker would have added much to the day's proceedings. We are very disappointed and it seems that incidents like this have happened elsewhere. My fear is that speakers from other organizations of which we disapprove will fill such gaps. I am a member of the Natal Midlands branch of the ANC but so far not much has happened here. I think the ANC in Natal has a lot of problems on its hands on

account of the current situation of unrest, and insufficient resources to address other issues.

We are looking forward to close contact between LIWOSA, ANC inside and outside the country, and progressive international bodies. In my previous correspondence with Nonkululeko I had asked if there was anything the University of Natal Library, Pietermaritzburg could do specifically to help the Somafo Library. It occurred to me that it might be a good idea if one of the progressive subject librarians at this library who was also a LIWOSA member could visit Tanzania for discussions. If we found the money for this, would you see it as a good thing, or would you have problems? Contact at an institutional level is obviously essential, but close links on a personal scale would also have their place.

You ask about re-structuring South African libraries. This is a massive task and will need discussion by a wide variety of organizations. In terms of aid there is one issue which happens to interest me in particular, and that is the need to re-patriate so much of the South African literature which has been expatriated over the last three decades, in particular because of censorship and informal repression. In a very small way I have been identifying post-war left wing literature which is simply not available to us here : I suspect that many libraries destroyed it. We need to identify this material precisely, ascertain its whereabouts in other countries and make arrangements for copies to be lodged in appropriate places. This is just one task of many: and it would be a full time job for someone for a considerable while. Overall we need to identify an action plan for South African libraries in a democratic society. That in itself is a major task which will involve large numbers of people.

I shall certainly keep you informed of developments concerning the new organization, and put you on the mailing list for Innovation. Thank you very much for writing, and bringing closer the day when we can meet together to discuss and plan the place of libraries in a democratic South Africa. Incidentally I am sending this packet via your Helsinki address as I suspect mail from South Africa to Tanzania is sometimes "lost".

Yours in the struggle,

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Christopher Merrett