

Letter sent to Nos. 9 to 15 (inclusive) on
adjoining list of addressees & dated 3rd May 1976.

01-730 9537

15, Sloane Court West,
Chelsea,
London, SW3 4TD.

House of Lords,
Westminster,
London, S.W.1.

Dear [redacted]

For many years I have been totally opposed to censorship and have never ceased to be amazed at the timidity of the British public in their toleration of the many repressive, undemocratic and out-dated laws which still remain on the Statute Book, especially in this field. I am still more amazed when I hear constant reference to our current, supposedly "permissive" society, often by people who should know better, when at the same time we have to stand by, helplessly, and watch the erosion, still further, of our individual freedom.

In the short space of a few, recent weeks, we have witnessed some most alarming events regarding censorship, which have no doubt filled with glee the hearts of Raymond Blackburn, Mary Whitehouse and the Festival of Light, but which I, and a multitude of others like me, regard with the gravest concern. First came the extraordinary ruling by the Court of Appeal about the interpretation of the Obscene Publications Acts. Then followed the introduction before Parliament of Mr. Timothy Renton's (M.P. for Mid-Sussex) preposterous Bill to amend these Acts. Last week we were subjected to Lord Denning's arrogant and schoolmasterly admonition to the democratically elected Greater London Council regarding film censorship. We appear, more and more, to be moving towards a totalitarian society. With the exception of Spain, we already have the toughest censorship in Western Europe yet the Government refuses to Act. Indeed, the Home Secretary has told me that, while not claiming that the present law is perfect (surely the understatement of the year!), he has no plans for immediate special legislation in this field but is "keeping the matter under review"!

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Unless we wish our liberties to be placed in jeopardy by out-moded and irrelevant puritanism, Parliament must act immediately and the only sensible, logical and realistic solution is the complete repeal of the Obscene Publications Acts, except for certain provisions for the protection of children. The British people must be allowed the freedom to choose for themselves what they see, read and hear.

With the support of many other like-minded people, including Mr. Clement Freud, M.P., I am currently forming a committee to inaugurate a national campaign which will militate for such legislation now. We intend, at last, to provide a really effective platform for the forceful expression of what we genuinely believe are the views of the vast majority of the British electorate on the censorship issue and one that will accurately reflect tolerant public opinion as opposed to the frenzied intolerance of the bigoted, pro-censorship minority. I hope and believe that your sympathies would lie with such a cause and I would like, therefore, to invite you to serve on such a committee, where your great experience would, of course, be invaluable. Please give the matter your urgent consideration and I shall look forward to hearing from you, I hope, in the very near future.

Yours sincerely,

David Webb,
Organiser,
National Campaign for the Repeal of the Obscene Publications Acts