

NO/DAW/DP

24th January, 1981.

The Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, C.H., M.C., M.P.,
Secretary of State For the Home Department,
Home Office,
50, Queen Anne's Gate,
London,
SW1H 9AT.

Dear Mr. Whitelaw,

On behalf of the Committee of the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts, may I thank you, most sincerely, for affording us the opportunity of meeting with you on Wednesday last, to discuss the Williams Report and our hopes and aspirations for possible future Government legislation in the field of censorship, and your kind and most courteous reception.

We were, of course, very disappointed, and indeed concerned, that you were unable to hold out any hope of Government action, in the wake of the Williams Report, in the present Parliamentary session. The prospect that the "status quo" will remain for the next year at least, is a deeply depressing thought. As I said, this is an admittedly contentious question, but we feel that this is no excuse for sweeping it under the carpet, or hoping that, if ignored, it will go away. Successive Governments have been doing that for years. We had hoped that, with a Government formed by a political party so totally dedicated to the freedom of the individual, the time would be ripe for the long-overdue, libertarian changes in our out-moded, repressive and unnecessary censorship legislation.

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The N.C.R.O.P.A. is a non-party political and enjoys support from political persuasions of all kinds. We are bound to say, however, that, more and more, day by day, overt Conservative support of pro-censorship causes is becoming frighteningly apparent. You have written to me in the past that you are opposed to censorship as, indeed, have many other members of the Conservative Party. If you and your colleagues really mean this, one is bound to ask why you are so unwilling to take action to implement your beliefs. We appreciate that reluctance to introduce legislation into the House which cannot possibly succeed but, with the substantial majority your party at present enjoys, why should you fear that outcome? Members of Parliament taking the Conservative whip would surely be bound to vote in favour of anti-censorship legislation. If they were to vote otherwise they would surely be betraying the creed of their own party and the platform on which they have been elected to office.

The National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts simply does not accept that the majority of the British people supports puritanical restrictions on its behaviour, no matter what a highly-organised, vociferous minority of self-appointed guardians of the nation's morals may wish to assert. The N.C.R.O.P.A. will, of course, be undeterred by your discomforting news and will continue to pursue, whenever and wherever possible, its eminently sensible cause. In the meantime we earnestly hope that H.M. Government will re-assess its priorities so that the time and inclination will be found to bring some reasonable kind of order to the crazy censorship restrictions which still remain in this country, virtually alone amidst all other countries of the so-called free Western World.

Once again, our very respectful thanks for the opportunity of our meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,

David Webb,

Organiser,

National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts.