

~~CENSORED~~

## NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

# N C R O P A

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The N.C.R.O.P.A. is affiliated to the National Council for Civil Liberties

NO/DAW/DP

5th July, 1985.

The Editor,  
"The Times",  
P.O. Box 7,  
200 Gray's Inn Road,  
London, WC1X 8EZ.

Dear Sir,

By now, we are all only too aware that Mrs. Mary Whitehouse attributes most of the world's ills to "pornography" (Letters 2nd July) and that she has, most regrettably and often quite dishonestly, persuaded Parliament to accept her excessively narrow-minded views. As a result, during the past seven years, no less than five separate pieces of draconian censorship legislation have been enacted, most of which were anyway legally duplicative and therefore unnecessary, but, in the wider interests of freedom of expression and freedom of choice, all of which were unreasonably authoritarian. They are, respectively, the Protection of Children Act 1978; the Indecent Displays (Control) Act 1981; the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, which introduced the licensing of sex shops and as a result of which nearly all such establishments have been put out of business completely; the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act 1982, which has effectively eradicated all commercial cinema clubs; and, most repressive of all, the Video Recordings Act 1984, which introduces, for the first time since the repeal of the Theatres Act 1843 by the passing of the 1968 Theatres Act, the concept of State pre-censorship.

These monstrous Acts are, of course, in addition to the many other repressive censorship Acts which already existed — the Obscene Publications Acts of 1959 and 1964, the 1953 Post Office Act, the 1876 Customs Consolidation Act and so on.

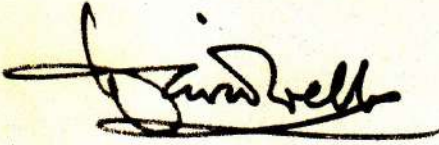
There is <sup>not</sup> as Mrs. <sup>Whitehouse</sup> asserts, a "flood of pornography" in this censor-saturated country, and more's the pity. "Pornography" does not cause, has not and will never be proven to have caused, harm. It does give, however, an enormous amount of innocuous pleasure to millions.

On the other hand, hard drugs are known and proven killers. To equate the two and claim some spurious link between their separate availabilities and effects, is both inaccurate and irresponsible. If Mrs. Whitehouse genuinely

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wishes to help combat the drugs problem, she should be calling for our absurd obscenity laws to be scrapped, rather than strengthened. This would greatly relieve the demands made on our law enforcement agencies and thereby release many of their personnel to fight the evil of drug abuse and other areas of real crime.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Webb", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Webb,  
Honorary Director,  
National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts