

~~GENCENSORED~~

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

FIGHTING SEXUAL CENSORSHIP

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NO/DAW/DP

2nd November 1992

Nicholas Winterton, Esq., M.P.,
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London,
SW1A 0AA.

Nicholas Winterton

Thank you for your letter of 27th October in response to my further letter of 26th October, and for which I am most grateful.

I cannot, however, allow you to get off the hook so easily, because you have still not answered the specific questions I have put to you in my two letters. These were:-

- (1) How can you reconcile your own personal views on 'freedom of expression' (which you clearly do not support, otherwise you would not have sought to have the Madonna book prosecuted with the hoped-for intention of having it banned) with those enshrined in fundamental Conservative Party philosophy (which does support 'freedom of expression' by virtue of its 'freedom of the individual' - 'freedom of choice' - 'freedom of the market-place' commitment)?
- (2) Why do you think a child seeing a copy of "Sex" by Madonna would be "seriously and adversely affected by its content"; and how would such an allegedly harmful effect manifest itself?

In response to your own comments on the example I cited of alcohol, far from demonstrating the strength of your case, it forcefully shows how a product with a known and proven potential to harm (often kill!) not only children but adults too, if it is abused, is still widely available (whether in licensed premises or not - nearly all supermarkets now have licences, do they not?), whereas a product with no known and proven harmful potential, viz a sexually-explicit article, is ruthlessly subjected to the severest restrictions including outright prohibition - not just for children, but for all. What kind of balanced, common-sense rationale is that, pray?

In any case, you state that "the same should apply to pornography and 'obscene' material". But this is just my point. It doesn't - not for the reasons you put forward, but because "pornography and

continuation/.....

'obscene' material (as you call it) is not legally on sale to anyone in this country, unlike alcohol, as the result of our draconian censorship laws. If all of this means - as I sincerely hope it does! - that you are not opposed to sexually-explicit material (or "pornography" if you will) being legally on sale to consenting adults in controlled premises (this does not mean restrictions on their numbers, however), then I and the NCROPA will be delighted to hear it. That would mean, in effect, that you therefore accept the findings and recommendations of the Williams Committee (the Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship) whose report has, quite disgracefully, been completely ignored by successive Governments since it was presented to Parliament way back in 1979 by the then Home Secretary, Willie Whitelaw.

Please do let me know your feeling on this and your answers to my specific questions because, as you may imagine, your prominent involvement in this matter has prompted great interest amongst the NCROPA's many members.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Webb', with a stylized flourish underneath.

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