

~~CENSORED~~

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

5th November 1992

Tony Blair, Esq., M.P.,
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London,
SW1A 0AA.

Dear Mr. Blair,

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It greatly concerns and saddens me that this, my first letter on behalf of the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA) to you since your appointment as 'Shadow Home Secretary' under John Smith's Parliamentary Labour Party leadership, has to be one expressing our horrified reaction to your demand that the Home Office should take immediate action to stop "pornographic" videos labelled as educational and put on sale in circumstances where they otherwise wouldn't be allowed (as reported in the "News of the World" 13th Sept.).

Firstly, "pornographic" videos are not proscribed by British law in whatever circumstances, for the simple reason that the concept of "pornography" per se does not exist in British law. What British censorship law centres around are the twin concepts of 'indecent' and 'obscenity', albeit, in our view, absurdly and unjustly.

Sex and videos about sex, whether explicit or not, are neither 'indecent' nor 'obscene' and that you, by implication, should find them so is, indeed, disturbing. It is even more disturbing, however, that, in a supposedly 'free society', you should wish them to be suppressed for those who choose to have them.

Speaking at a Law Society 'fringe' meeting of the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool last month you said "Labour is the party of individual rights". Individual rights include the right to 'freedom of expression', as enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, to both of which great charters the U.K. is an original signatory, but to both of which, disgracefully, she comes nowhere near to honouring her obligations and commitments.

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Real 'freedom of expression' in this country is simply a myth, because of the intolerable restrictions placed on it by our outrageously draconian and out-moded censorship laws. That you should be apparently supporting those perpetual sickening calls from the 'Puritan Brigade' lobby for still more censorship restraints, whilst at the same time purporting to champion individual freedom, is, frankly, deeply depressing and hugely disappointing. We had hoped for a much more enlightened attitude from the Labour Party.

On 8th October, at the Conservative Party Conference in Brighton, the NCROPA held its own 'fringe' meeting on the subject of "Freedom of Expression and State Sexual Censorship". I am enclosing herewith a copy of my speech to that meeting because it sets out the NCROPA's much-ignored, long-standing views on censorship law reform (I founded the NCROPA nearly 17 years ago, in April 1976) and it really is about time our rational, common-sense, realistic, honest and, above all, just approach to this issue was acknowledged and acted upon - just as the similar findings, and similarly much-ignored recommendations of the Williams Report (the Report of the Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship Cmnd 7772 HMSO), which was presented to Parliament thirteen years ago, in November 1979, ought to be acknowledged and acted upon.

Yours sincerely,



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

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