

~~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

26th February 1992

The Rt. Hon. John Major, M.P.,
The Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London,
SW1A 2AA.

RECORDED DELIVERY

Dear Prime Minister,

In your address to the Conservative Party Conference at Blackpool on 11th October last year, you said:-

"I want to give individuals greater control over their own lives".

You went on to say:-

"That is our programme for the 90s. I will put it in a single phrase: the power to choose - and the right to own."

and you further enlarged on that by affirming that:-

" choice is something most of us can be trusted with."

It was with great surprise and concern, therefore, that, only three weeks later, according to the 1st November edition of "The Daily Telegraph", you had written to Michael Alison, M.P., the Second (Parliamentary) Church Estates Commissioner, indicating Government support for a possible commitment to the inclusion in the forthcoming

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COMMITTEE - Alexander Barrie, A.A.Dipl. M.A.I.E.; Professor Gerald Fowler, M.A. (Hons.), F.A.B.E.; Ted Goodman, LL.B. (Sol.); Clifford Hanley; David Kennington, M.A. (Hons.), Litt.D., B.A. (Psy.); Isabel Koprowski, B.A.; Eric E. Miller; Tuppy Owens, B.Sc., Dip.H.S.; Dr. Christine Pickard, M.B., Ch.B.

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Conservative Party Election Manifesto of measures to strengthen the present so-called "obscene" publications legislation and, in particular, the 1959 Obscene Publications Act.

The United Kingdom's present "obscene" publications legislation is indisputably the most draconian State censorship legislation of its kind anywhere in the so-called 'free' world. This now even includes many countries from the former Communist 'Eastern Bloc', like East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, who have swiftly and eagerly rid themselves of the kind of viciously repressive State censorship laws to which the U.K., now almost alone, is still subject, and rapidly aligned themselves with the truly free Western World countries, in particular with the other member states of the European Community. That anyone should wish this country to retain its present intolerable level of authoritarian, State censorship where the people's "power to choose" and "right to own" is categorically denied them, is alarming enough, but that there are those like Mr. Alison who wish to repress sexually the British people still further is, frankly, frightening and quite beyond my comprehension.

'Sex' and the pursuit of sexual gratification is, and always has been, a perfectly natural, instinctive, human phenomenon. That publications (pictures, books, magazines, films, videos, etc.) about 'sex' and matters sexual should attract the same enthusiastic interest is, thus, also perfectly natural. Such publications for consenting adults are not, and have never been proved to be, in themselves harmful, as the 1979 Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship and the 1990 Home Office Research Review "Pornography: Impacts and Influences" both found. In fact quite the reverse is true. They are most certainly harmless, but also, in many instances, positively helpful in solving sexual problems, in sexual development and education, or simply and unapologetically in providing a suitable stimulant to aid masturbation, which relieves sexual tension and natural desire in a highly enjoyable and non-threatening way (the safety-valve effect).

If all the other countries I have already referred to find no need to 'protect' their citizens by proscribing such sexually-explicit mater-

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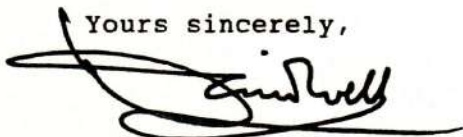
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ial, and instead afford them "the power to choose and the right to own", why should the U.K., virtually alone, still persist in so doing?

If you and your fellow Conservatives really wish the voters to believe that you are committed to the freedom of the individual, freedom of choice and the freedom of the market-place - including, of course, the "genuine single market, open for business right across the Community" which you trumpeted so loudly in your Blackpool speech - you will include in your Election Manifesto a commitment, not to strengthening the obscene publications acts, but to repealing them.

You said in your Blackpool speech that you are "always ready to listen to new ideas". The idea of 'freedom of expression' as an inalienable human right is, of course, not a new idea. It was included in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights way back in 1948 and long before that, of course, in the United States of America Constitution when added in 1791 as the First Amendment; and in 1953 it was included in the European Convention of Human Rights. However, to many in this ever growingly authoritarian country, including shamefully many in the Conservative Party, 'freedom of expression' is an apparently un-heard-of concept. The National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA) very much hopes that you are not among these depressing people, that you really mean it when you say you are "always ready to listen", that you will 'see-off' the Michael Alisons, the Mary Whitehouses, the puritans and god-botherers, the State-nannyists, and that totally unrepresentative but vociferous small army of self-appointed guardians of the nation's morals, and that you will, at long last, bring some humanitarian common-sense to this very vexed, but absurdly over-emotionalised issue of sexual freedom. There are many votes in it and the NCROPA will be urging its supporters - and there are millions! - to vote only for those who promise to restore what is ours as of right, viz our freedom to choose, or, in your own words, "the power to choose - and the right to own".

Yours sincerely,



David Webb,

Honorary Director, N.C.R.O.P.A.