



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

19th January 1993

The Editor,
"The Independent",
40 City Road,
London,
EC1Y 2DB.

MAGAZINE LETTERS
FOR PUBLICATION

Dear Sir,

Why does nearly every newspaper article about our peculiarly British, excessively repressive sexual censorship laws have to be so innately disapproving and smugly condemnatory of the laws of the vast majority of other 'Western' countries which do not impose such harsh and unnatural censorship restraints on their citizens? - and why is Sandra Barwick ("Sex and the Single Market", "The Independent Magazine", page 18, 16th January) so "absolutely certain that Parliament would not be able today ... to legalise the broadcasting of hard porn"?

Are we never going to accept that it is us, the British, who are the oddballs when it comes to dealing with matters of sexual expression?

In a desperate attempt to demonstrate otherwise, Ms. Barwick could only rustle up Ireland (a tiny country of only 3½ million people, remember) as an example of like-minded, British style Puritanism which might be similarly outraged by EC standards of sexual acceptability.

When it wishes, the British Government can, and does, stand up to

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vociferous, if often unrepresentative, attacks of 'outrage' from highly predictable factions of the public, and bravely enacts legislation which, as a matter of principle, it considers right and just. No principle is worthier to uphold and more crucial to the maintenance of a free society than freedom of expression, yet no principle is more abused and ignored in the supposedly 'free' UK, quite hypocritically an original, founding signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights, with its splendid Article 10 on the right to freedom of expression.

The availability in this country of so-called "hard-core pornography", whether on TV or elsewhere, is not a European Community issue. It is an issue of human rights and freedoms for everyone, everywhere. The UK nanny-state must grow up, relieve itself of years of shameful repression and enact fair and proper 'obscenity' and 'indecenty' law reforms in these interests without further delay. That is the only realistic and just solution and one that most other countries of the so-called 'free world' have already adopted.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Webb", with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

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