

18th March 1993

NCROPA  
15 Sloane Court West  
LONDON  
SW3 4TD



Formerly the Society  
for Strip Illustration

7 DILKE STREET LONDON SW3 4JE

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to you to inform you of our current anti-censorship campaign and to seek your guidance and assistance.

As an organisation representing the interests of creators in the comics business, we see it as our duty to speak out against the draconian censorship laws of this country. Our interest in the problem has been kindled by a Customs and Excise raid on Gosh Comics, of Great Russell Street, late last year. Eight officers spent six hours in the comic shop and seized 574 items. Many of these items were later returned, but amongst those destroyed was a title published in this country and not imported. This latter action was possible under the law as it stands.

The CCG campaign aims to persuade the public and H M Government that the Customs related laws should be brought in line with the Obscene Publications Act, as outlined in the enclosed statement. This does not mean we whole heartedly endorse this Act, however, we believe a change in the laws used by Customs is a vital step in the wider debate. We intend to bring about change via a publicity campaign, letters from members to their MP's, a petition and any other means available.

At this time we are asking you whether you have any relevant experiences to share with us or any information, or helpful advice to offer. Perhaps you have suggestions as to other activities we could organise in relationship to this campaign. If so we should be grateful if you would write to us at the following address:

**The Comics Creators Guild  
(Anti-censorship Campaign)  
4/394 Streatham High Road  
LONDON SW16 6HX  
Tel 081 677 6737**

Thanking you in advance for your interest.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas J Vince  
Chairman

**RECEIVED 22 MAR 1993**

Chairman Nicholas J Vince Vice Chairman Donald Room Treasurer Matt Brooker  
Secretaries Ron Tiner & Simon Weston

In case of urgent need please contact Simon Weston at 4/394 Streatham High Road LONDON SW16 6HX 081-677 6737



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### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

The Comics Creators Guild strongly condemns any action taken by Customs and Excise in seizing imported comics published expressly for the enjoyment of mature comics readers. This material is freely available in Europe and the USA and we believe the citizens of this country have an equal right of access to it.

At present there is no clear guide regarding the importation of material for mature readers. Without clear guide lines on what material Customs and Excise is liable to seize, creators, publishers and retailers of comics for mature readers cannot freely carry out their trade, without fear of seizure of monthly titles which, in the nature of the trade, they import sight unseen.

We call on H M Government to bring the law by which the Customs and Excise acts in seizing supposedly indecent and obscene material (the Customs Consolidation Act of 1876 and the Customs and Excise Management Act of 1979) in line with the Obscene Publications Act (1959) so that imported comics could not be forfeit unless forfeiture would be justified under the terms of the Obscene Publications Act. As the law relating to imported comics now stands, a Court is not bound to consider either the test of obscenity or the defence that such material is for the public good - valuable checks on extremism which are available when a charge is brought under the Obscene Publications Act. Whether or not an imported comic is obscene should be judged by the same legal test that applies to all forms of art and literature published in this country.

ENDS

Honorary Chairmen David Lloyd Neil Gaiman Mark Buckingham  
Chairman Nicholas J Vince Vice Chairman Steve Whitaker Treasurer Matt Brooker  
Secretaries Ron Tiner & Simon Weston

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