

ACCOUNT OF VISIT BY NCROPA DELEGATION TO PRIVATE SHOWING
OF THE DOCUMENTARY FILM:
"BRAZIL: CINEMA, SEX AND THE GENERALS"

(4 pages)

On the evening of the 6th November 1985, the Honorary Director of NCROPA (David Webb) and the Legal adviser to NCROPA (Ted Goodman) attended the showing by the film's producer at Battersea Adult Education Institute. Several other interested persons had also been invited.

After the hour-long documentary had been shown, the Producer Simon Hogart of Large Door Ltd explained the cuts that the Independent Broadcasting Authority had demanded. He said that he had negotiated a reduction in the number of cuts from seven to two, provided he could include with the film, the information that it had been cut. The IBA refused such permission and the Producer refused to allow a cut version of his documentary to be shown without such information. There the matter rests.

The cut scenes were excerpts from films passed by the Brazilian Censors during the period of Military Government which ended a year ago. They were not hard-core pornography ie they were not from films made after civilian government was introduced and all cinema and theatre censorship abolished. In other words the IBA applies stricter censorship than the Brazilian Military dictatorship did! The excerpts showed how under the military regime, film producers had managed to get scenes of political protest passed by the Censors by disguising them as dialogue in erotic scenes. The censors thus allowed the films as being merely harmless soft-core "porno ^(porno slapstick) channel _Λ films and not political protest.

The decision of the IBA was immediately reported in the Press in Brazil and France, but the British Press only gave it minor coverage two weeks later. Channel Four talk-back programme, however, had received many complaints about the ban.

Mr. Hogart then gave details of ² a documentary he was making on the abolition of film censorship in France, which the BBC had indicated they would refuse to show. He said that he had discovered that the reason for this was that exception was taken to an interview with the then French Minister of Culture (the predecessor of the present holder of that office) in which the Minister had stated (in English) that the French Government did not seek to prevent adult citizens from having access to whatever visual material they wanted.

Apparently the BBC do not want such sentiments publicised in Britain! This compares with the Independent Broadcasting Authority's decision ten years ago to prohibit the showing of the documentary "Sex in our Time" which dealt with the legalisation of pornography in Scandinavia.

Mr. Hogart explained that hard-core pornographic ^{CINEMAS} ~~cinemas~~ were now flourishing in Brazil and the only legal restriction left was that the export (but not import) of pornographic films was prohibited, so as not to give Brazil a bad name! (In France the reverse is the case. Imports of pornography are subjected to a prohibitive tariff to protect home-produced pornography which thus has a monopoly). He said that this was no cultural tragedy, since Brazilian porno-films were inferior to quality to imported ones and that was why Brazilian cinemas often showed foreign pornographic films in preference to cheaper Brazilian ones. He said that video was not yet widespread in Brazil and therefore the pornographic cinemas there were not suffering the decline in numbers which was taking place in France.

Simon Hogart said that France now had code television. The system was that owners of television sets could pay a fee to the code television company, in return for which they would receive a coding device enabling their sets to receive the code programmes transmitted by the code company. He said that in the first six months of its existence the code television company had nearly gone bankrupt for lack of subscribers, but then it started to transmit hard-core pornographic films (which are perfectly lawful in France). As a result the number of subscribers has greatly increased and the company is now profitable. He said he doubted the viability of British cable television unless it was (like French code television) allowed to transmit material of a different nature than that on the ordinary channels.

The Producer then threw open the discussion.

A feminist stated that the only thing that disturbed her about explicit films was violence to women, not sex. A Brazilian lady explained that, even under the Military Government, violence had been permitted in Brazilian films and that, now censorship had been abolished, sex had replaced violence as the most popular film ingredient. She explained that visual violence was more

acceptable in Catholic countries than in Britain, because of the tradition of widespread depiction of Christ suffering on the Cross.

David Webb, (the Director of NCROPA) mentioned the United States situation. The Producer explained how American television and video recordings were of a different, technically incompatible system from that prevalent in Britain.

Ted Goodman, (the NCROPA legal adviser) mentioned that formal film censorship was in the process of being abolished in Greece and Italy. Mr. Hogart stated that hard-core pornographic cinemas (known as "red light cinemas") had been widespread in Italy for five years and therefore a change in the censorship law there was only legalising what was already in practice permitted! Ted Goodman agreed, since hard-core pornographic magazines had been openly sold in Italy for ten years.

Other members of the audience commented on how censorship in Britain was nearly always applied to sex, because that was the British obsession. It was noted that while other Western countries are abolishing censorship, the United Kingdom is extending it.

A discussion about the possible effects of the Video Recordings Act ensued. The lecturer on filming at the Battersea Adult Education Institute said he was particularly worried about the effect the Act would have on small groups trying to produce video recordings illustrating their aims. Such groups would not be able to afford the video classification fees and thus would not be allowed to sell their video recordings.