

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS (NCROPA)

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 15 SLOANE COURT WEST,
CHELSEA, LONDON, SW3 4TD at 7.30 p.m. on 31st July 1987

PRESENT: David Webb (Hon. Director), Alexander Barrie, Edward Goodman,
David Kennington, Pamela Manson and Eric Miller.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Elizabeth Goodfellow, who had also tendered her resignation from the Committee, because she was "finding it increasingly difficult to defend the producers of "pornography" whose predominant interest is money not freedom of thought and speech."

The Director expressed his deep regret and concern that her former high commitment to our principles and erstwhile staunch support had so suddenly and puzzlingly apparently evaporated. Other committee members, however, expressed their doubts about her claimed reasons for leaving being the whole story.

Pamela Manson thought that David Webb was affording too much attention to the matter and that the Committee was spending too much time on a somewhat pointless 'post-mortem'. Having made her decision, we should accept the situation, find a replacement for her if possible, and press on with the business in hand. This was agreed.

2. The Minutes of the last meeting of 30th October 1986, not having been previously circulated, were read by the Director and approved by the Committee. The Director apologised for the long lapse since the last meeting which, he explained, had been caused by a number of extenuating circumstances, especially those affecting his personal life, including a family bereavement.
3. Matters Arising from the Minutes. It was noted that Ms. Ginny Wall, who had previously expressed a willingness to serve on the Committee, had proved very difficult to contact. Eric Miller, who had been endeavouring to arrange an exploratory discussion with her on behalf of the Committee, confirmed that, although he had exercised great 'elasticity' in trying to accommodate her timetable and whereabouts, she had been very elusive. It was therefore decided not to invite her to join the Committee.
4. Director's Report. David Webb said that so much NCROPA activity had occurred since the last meeting that there was only time for him to mention some of the main matters.

He reported that he had, after considerable resistance from British Telecom, made arrangements for NCROPA to be listed in the London telephone directory. It will be added to the next edition of the L to R directory and listed as 'National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA), 15 Sloane Court West, SW3 4TD.'

With Edward Goodman, he had attended the charitable function known as "The Sex Maniacs' Ball" at the London Dungeon on 20th November last year, which was organised by Ms. Tuppy Owens, editor and publisher of "The Sex Maniacs' Diary". The Ball was in aid of The Outsiders Club, a charity for the socially and sexually handicapped. A benefactor had donated £500.00 for a full-page advertisement in the Souvenir Brochure and Ms. Owens had kindly offered it to NCROPA free of charge.

The Director gave details of the complaint he had made to the Independent Television Companies Association about its blanket refusal of advertise-

ments for the new Sunday newspaper "Sunday Sport". The reason given for the ban was that "Sunday Sport" was owned by David Sullivan, who had previously owned a chain of sex shops. The Director had written to David Shaw, General Secretary of the I.T.C.A., who replied by saying that the ban was simply that the content of the proposed advertisements was unacceptable. It was noted that the ban had been lifted and that "Sunday Sport" was free to submit revised commercials. "Sunday Sport" appeared to have done very well without them, however.

The Director described how, through the harassment and interference of the Metropolitan police and Westminster City Council, Leo Ford, an American male stripper, had been prevented from giving his intended performance at the London Hippodrome on 10th November last year. The Director said that he had tried to mount a protest, but, although he had had support from Mr. Ford's London agent, he had given up because of lack of co-operation from the Hippodrome management who were obviously in fear of 'crossing' the authorities and perhaps putting their licence at risk.

It had been reported in the national press that Bonhams, the well-known auctioneers, had withdrawn two items from a sale of erotica on police 'advice'. A NCROPA letter to the Metropolitan Police about this had produced the usual response that the Police never give advice on what constitutes 'obscenity'. A spokesman for Bonhams had telephoned Mr. Webb and maintained that the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Mail had both mis-reported the facts of the story. The Director thought his explanation unconvincing and, once again, it appeared that he was nervous of the police and would prefer the matter to be conveniently forgotten.

David Webb described his participation in the Pete Murray radio phone-in programme on L.B.C. on 3rd September 1986, in which Mrs. Mary Whitehouse claimed that she had regular meetings on policy with police forces including the Metropolitan Police. On writing to the 'Met' Chief Commissioner Sir Kenneth Newman, the Director had been informed that this certainly was not so.

The Director had also written to the Director of Public Prosecutions, Marmaduke Hussey, Chairman of the BBC Governors and Edmund Dell, Chairman of channel 4 TV, about the illegal video recording of television programmes by Mary Whitehouse and which she had subsequently screened for M.P.s and the press at the House of Commons. The D.P.P. had lost two letters from the Director, so he had sent duplicates, a reply to which was still awaited. The television chiefs had been sympathetic although they did not propose to prosecute for breach of copyright. The Chairman of the BBC had instructed his managing director of programmes, Bill Cotton, to write to Mrs. Whitehouse and warn her not to infringe copyright law in future. The actor Patrick Malahide, who had featured in "The Singing Detective", one of the programmes illegally recorded, had also been written to. He was furious that his performance had been publicly screened without his permission and without payment of an appropriate fee.

Mrs. Whitehouse had written to advertisers asking them to avoid 'red triangle' on Channel 4. The Director had written letters to the advertisers who had ^{agreed to do so} ~~agreed to do so~~ asking them to ^{do the opposite} ~~do the opposite~~. He had received replies from Sir John Sainsbury and Sir Jeremy Morse, Chairman of Lloyds Bank stating that their 'ads' had not stopped because of Mrs. Whitehouse.

In response to a request from the British Museum Department of Coins and Medals, the Director had sent a NCROPA button badge.

The Director gave details of his correspondence with Mrs. Joanna Bogle, Mrs. Whitehouse's protégée and deputy, following an article about her and her

monstrous views in the new London evening newspaper "The Daily News".

Finally the Director described the experiences of the NCROPA delegates (himself and Edward Goodman) to the 1987 Annual General Meeting of the National Council for Civil Liberties on 25th and 26th April at London University Students' Union. He gave an account of the blocking of a preposterous extreme feminist motion in favour of pornography censorship, proposed by Catherine Itzen, a researcher at Essex University and member of the NCCL's Women's Committee.

He had also written to the editor of the free magazine "Girl About Town" and to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the NCCL, about an article in the magazine written by Ms. Itzen in which she vehemently attacked pornography, and in which she described herself as representing the NCCL (despite the NCCL's rejection of her views and her motion, and in spite of Article 7 of the Charter of Civil Rights and Liberties - Freedom of speech and Publication.

5. Date of Annual General Meeting. After discussion, it was decided that, if possible, it should be held on Thursday, 22nd October 1987. The Director said that he would try and book Conway Hall Library for that date. It was decided that only members would be invited.
6. New Committee Members. NCROPA's new Committee Member, Alexander Barrie, was welcomed and formally introduced himself. He said that he was a writer and freelance representative for a toy manufacturer. He had three children and lived in Blackheath, South London. He briefly outlined his belief that adults should be free to read what they wanted. He talked about his recent visit to France where he noticed that even small provincial bookshops stocked hard-core "pornography" and no-one minded. He contrasted this to the uptight British attitude to erotic material.

The Director described his informal and unofficial meeting with Isabel Koprowski, editor of "Forum" magazine. He recommended that she be invited to serve on the Committee. This was agreed.

7. Membership and Subscriptions. Eric Miller was appointed Membership Secretary.
8. Any Other Business. Eric Miller gave details of some of the 'Private' Organisation's publicity material, something which had been ^{discussed} ~~raised~~ during an interview the Director had given to two authors who had been commissioned by the publishers Faber to write a book on "pornography". Edward Goodman pointed out that that organisation's ^{and books with} ~~former owner~~ now owned "Sunday Sport" and that the directors of "Sunday Sport" were NCROPA benefactors. The Sunday was soon to become a daily. The Director pointed out that he had been asked to write articles for "Sunday Sport" and would shortly commence to do so.

The Director was asked to write to Harriet Harman M.P., a former NCCL Legal Officer, about the attempts of her fellow female Labour MP, Clare Short, to outlaw topless pin-up pictures in newspapers.

9. Date of Next Committee Meeting. The date of the next Committee Meeting was fixed for 24th September 1987, to be held at 15 Sloane Court West, Chelsea, SW3. This meant that it would take place before the Annual general Meeting and the agenda for that important meeting could then be decided.

Signed..... *David Webb* David Webb, Honorary Director, as a true record
on..... *7th October 1987*