

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

MINUTES OF MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING 4TH DEC. 1989

HELD AT THE CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1.

1. Chairman's Welcoming Address Ted Goodman, the NCROPA's Honorary Legal Adviser and Committee Member, took the chair and welcomed members to the meeting. He reminded them that this was a private members' meeting with no Press present. He said that a member, Ms. Ginny Wall, had asked to be allowed to tape-record the meeting for her private collection of 'anti-censorship' tapes. The meeting agreed to this. The Chairman apologised, on behalf of the Committee, for the fact that there had not been a Members' General Meeting for so long. He said that the Honorary Director would explain the reasons for this in his Report. Apologies for absence had been received from Committee Member Alexander Barrie and Victor Lownes, and other unnamed members.

2. Honorary Director's Report David Webb began his Report by regretting the growing prevalence in the media to acquiesce in the highly erroneous - and insulting - implication that all men were potential women-molesters. He cited the Home Office's recently published handbook "Practical Ways to Crack Crime" as a bad example of this. He went on to deplore the Clare Short 'Off-the-Shelf' campaign, which was really nothing short of a chillingly Orwellian attempt at controlling the thoughts of others, and he highlighted the Cleveland child abuse scandal. All these were examples of totally unjustified presumed guilt. - Men were presumed 'guilty' of molesting women, parents were presumed 'guilty' of abusing children and men's magazines were presumed 'guilty' of harming women. All the 'accused' were then required to prove their 'innocence' in a quite improper turnabout of usually accepted legal practice.

The Director believed that the "fascistic feminist" groups were the NCROPA's current biggest threat, even though he did not accept that they were representative of the majority of the country's womenfolk.

He very much regretted the long delay in holding this meeting but lack of resources, lack of time and his own personal and family health problems were largely responsible. He reminded the meeting that all NCROPA work was, of course, done voluntarily.

On a happier note he was able to report a magnificent donation of £1000.00 and another earlier generous donation of £300.00 from an anonymous benefactor. Eric Miller had, he said, agreed to take on the onerous task of Membership Secretary.

He reported the ~~welcome~~ recruitment of two new Committee members - Alexander Barrie, a businessman and writer, and Isabel Koprowski, Managing Editor to a well-known magazine publishing company.

The NCROPA had been involved in a vast amount of activity which was impossible to detail there, David Webb said, but he went on to report a selection of some items from the NCROPA diary as examples - circularisations, protests, correspondences, letters to the media, attendances at meetings, talks, interviews, lobbyings, radio and television programme appearances and so on.

The Director reported the receipt, gratefully, of complimentary copies of a number of books, publications and magazines.

Finally the Director read in full the letter he had just received from the new Home Secretary, David Waddington M.P., which indicated that the Government were considering a change of the present legislative test for 'obscenity', and which he found "ominous". It was, he said, a grim note to end on, but demonstrated, as if it were necessary, the urgent need for the continued existence of the NCROPA and, above all, its strengthening.

3. Obituary With great regret the Chairman, Ted Goodman, sadly announced the untimely death of Committee Member Pamela Manson. He said that she was a talented actress who had done valuable campaigning. The Director had attended her funeral on behalf of the NCROPA and a donation had been sent to Pamela's favourite charity, the Stars' Organisation for Spastics, in accordance with the wishes of her family.

3A. New Committee Member Isabel Koprowski was introduced to the meeting as a new member of the Committee and gave a short speech about some of her activities on the anti-censorship front.

4. Financial Report The current financial was presented to the meeting by the Honorary Director.

5. Dispute with the National Council for Civil Liberties The Hon. Director reported on his attendance at the April 1988 AGM of the NCCL. He explained how the NCROPA had been affiliated for ten years and how he, as a NCROPA delegate, had attended every NCCL AGM during that period. He described the growing influence of "fascistic feminists" and their narrow victory at the 1988 AGM, when their pro-censorship motion was adopted by 6 votes on a recount. He urged members of the NCROPA to join NCCL as individual members and attend its AGM to counter the unrepresentative authoritarian feminists who had infiltrated that organisation in large numbers in order to gain control. He said their leader, Catherine Itzin, had formed the absurdly named new "Campaign Against Pornography AND Censorship" and was sadly supported by erstwhile anti-censorship campaigner Alf Dubs. David Webb said that the NCROPA's affiliation to the NCCL would now have to be reconsidered.

6. Members' Questions and Open Discussion Dr. Bill Thompson spoke about his attendance at the NCCL Groups' Meeting at Bristol on 18th Nov. 1989 and how the pro-censorship feminists had been outvoted. Mr. Kaufmann said he had arrived in this country as a refugee from Nazi Germany and was horrified to find that Britain was becoming so authoritarian and censorious. Mrs. Jensen said she was a German Jewess and believed that the only way to beat the pro-censorship feminists was to have ~~at least half~~ <sup>some</sup> the places on the NCROPA Committee occupied by females. The Director explained the difficulties of recruiting suitable female activists. *by who we not in any way commercially interested*

Several members deprecated the pro-Whitehouse bias of the BBC. The Chairman, Ted Goodman, observed that the BBC was frightened of Mrs. Whitehouse and her friend Mrs. Thatcher, but were not, unfortunately, frightened of the NCROPA. The Director gave a detailed account of his long-running correspondence with leading figures in the BBC in attempting to correct the bias.

Questions were asked about the increasing efforts of HM Customs & Excise to stop adults bringing in videos and publications of their choice from abroad. The Director said that he had been consulted by someone who had ordered three sexually explicit videos by mail order and as a result had had his house raided by Customs officers. In response to a question about the effect of "1992" on this, the Chairman said the British O.P. Acts would still criminalise possession for gain in this country. All members who spoke about the NCCL situation urged that the NCROPA should remain affiliated and continue the struggle for freedom of expression inside rather than outside that organisation. Disgust was expressed at the contents of the Home Secretary's letter to the Director stating that the O.P. Acts needed to be strengthened to avoid people being "offended" by material.

There was a wide-ranging discussion as to how the NCROPA could best increase its influence. The Chairman stressed that it was Members of Parliament, and only M.P.s, who made the law and that in Britain they wanted to be seen to be condemning 'obscenity'.

7. Any Other Business Several members urged the Committee to consider a new shorter name for the NCROPA or a logo which would catch the public's attention. *This however was not adopted.*

*Signed: Ted Goodman 12th June 1991.  
as approved by Members General Meeting*