

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF NCROPA HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH 1983 at CONWAY HALL RED LION SQUARE
LONDON WCI

- (1) Edward A C Goodman took the chair and opened the meeting at 7.45 pm. He referred the members to the Agendas and accounts in the Hall.
- (2) Apologies for absence from members of the Committee who were unable to attend were read out namely: Gerald Fowler, and Doctor Brian Richards.
- (3) From the chair Edward A C Goodman explained that it was proposed to change the title of the "Organiser" to that of "Director". He asked David Webb to explain the reasons for this. Mr Webb told the meeting that the new title would be more in keeping with the functions of the office and would bring us into line with our main opponents, the National Viewers and Listeners Association, the Festival of Light etc. "It was not megalomania setting in", he said "or delusions of grandeur". From the chair Mr Goodman thereupon asked the NCROPA Members present to approve the change in title which they did unanimously.
- (4) From the chair Mr Goodman asked the members present to approve the Committee and give the Director the power to co-opt new members of the Committee in consultation with the other members of the Committee. From the chair, Mr Goodman then asked any members who were prepared to take an active part in helping NCROPA with its activities, to write their names and addresses on the paper provided for this purpose in the hall. Several did so.
- (5) From the chair, Mr Goodman then referred the members to the copies of the accounts. He pointed out that these accounts covered a seven-year period and that this meant that the average income of NCROPA for that period was £22.00 per week, which had not even covered expenses such as postage and telephones. He explained that members of the Committee did their

work without payment, but that even allowing for this, NCROPA was desperately short of funds and its activities were severely restricted by this. He therefore stated that it was proposed to increase the subscription from £2.00 to £5.00 which would be halved for students, senior citizens and the unwaged. This proposal was agreed to by the members present unanimously.

- (6) From the chair, Mr Goodman then stated that the Director would deliver his report, after which the meeting would be thrown open for questions and a discussion. He also explained that the meeting had to end by 10.00 pm.

David Webb thereupon gave an outline account of the activities of NCROPA since he founded it 7 years ago. He explained that time did not permit him to give a detailed account and that therefore he was only mentioning the highlights. He explained how the Linda Lovelace book trial in 1976 triggered him to found NCROPA on the 29 April 1983. He explained how he had thereupon recruited a Committee of helpers and gave a special mention of thanks to Mr Eric Miller, who was present at the General Meeting, and who had been a founder member of the Committee, as had Dr Brian Richards. He explained how other members of the Committee had joined since and expressed a special message of thanks to Mr Goodman, the Legal Advisor. He explained the circumstances of the resignation from the Committee in 1978 of Clement Freud MP (Liberal) and Andrew McKay MP (Conservative). He pointed out that the other Parliamentarian on the Committee, namely Gerald Fowler, had unfortunately lost his seat at the last General Election but happily, was still on the Committee and advised on relations between NCROPA and the House of Commons. Mr Webb also explained the importance of having Viscount Norwich on the Committee.

David Webb gave a special account of his many correspondence campaigns and press releases and the activity of the NCROPA Committee Vis-a-vis the ^{Home Office} Williams Committee and detailed NCROPA's submission to that Committee and subsequent appraisal of the ^{Home Office} Williams Report. He explained how NCROPA had been invited to give oral

evidence to the Williams Committee and how a delegation had done so. He also gave details of two subsequent visits to the Home Office by members of the Committee of NCROPA regarding the piecemeal Legislation which had followed the publication of the Williams Report; namely the Indecent Displays (Control) Act 1981, the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act 1982, and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and how the NCROPA had lobbied members of the GLC and the House of Commons regarding this legislation.

Mr Webb was applauded by the members present and a vote of thanks was proposed from the floor and carried unanimously.

(7) From the chair, Mr Goodman added his thanks to Mr Webb and emphasised how difficult the situation was in Britain. He pointed out how, despite the fact that practically all other Western countries had liberalised their laws in this field, in the United Kingdom recent legislation had made the legal position even more oppressive. He exemplified this by pointing out that two members of NCROPA, namely Messrs Gold and Lindsay, had the previous month been sentenced to terms of imprisonment for importing films which were perfectly legal throughout the rest of the western world. He then opened the meeting for questions and proposals for future activities from members.

A lively question and answer and discussion session ensued. Among those who participated Mr Bondy, a former member of the GLC, explained how he had been active in politics for 20 years and how the low quality of many of the publications and persons selling them in the United Kingdom as opposed to the Continent made British Politicians unsympathetic. In response from the chair, Mr Goodman pointed out that while this field in Britain remained tainted by illegality the situation could not improve.

Mr Kaufmann, an active member of NCROPA resident in

Ealing, also spoke about this. Mrs E J Woodward then suggested that the name "National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts" might be unhelpful to the cause. More support for it might be forthcoming if we changed it to for example, 'Campaign Against Censorship'. Although sympathising with this viewpoint, David Webb felt that the name should truthfully reflect what we stood for.

Mr Michael Freeman, another member, explained how he had recently served a term of imprisonment and was on bail awaiting a further trial for producing non-violent erotic films which were perfectly lawful in other Western countries. He stressed that he believed that the feminist movement was very powerful in Great Britain and that the only way that NCROPA could resist their criticism was by confining its campaign to the Liberalisation of the law regarding non-violent material. However other members and Mr. David Webb pointed out the dangers of accepting that censorship was necessary for violent material which meant that any such power of censorship could then be used against other material.

Sara Bhaskaran, a member of NCROPA who had been prosecuted for her part in producing allegedly obscene publications, explained the iniquity of the great powers of the Police in breaking and entering premises and strip-searching people suspected of producing such publications and how she had been subjected to this.

Mr Ian Morgan thought that a Bill of Rights for the citizens of this country would perhaps help towards achieving the aims of the NCROPA and David Webb agreed with this being a useful step in the right direction, as had several MPs who had been trying, so far unsuccessfully, to introduce such legislation and who had corresponded with him.

(8) Members of the Committee, including Mr Eric Miller and David Kennington, then gave their comments about future prospects. In the chair, Mr Goodman, asked members not to be too despondent and pointed out that, from his experiences as a Lawyer active in the field of legal reform, he had discovered that any legal reform group in this country only had a small number of members, because most ordinary people did not understand the law and thus could not advocate reform of specific laws. As such activity was spare time and unpaid, one could not expect large numbers, he said. He

also pointed out that there were signs of a breakthrough in media interest, exemplified by the fact that on the Monday of the previous week David Webb had appeared once on television and twice on radio on behalf of NCROPA.

- (9) The Chairman, Edward A C Goodman, closed the meeting shortly after 10.00 pm and thanked Members for their active contributions and help. From the floor the Committee was thanked. Several members before leaving made donations to NCROPA to help its future work and most members present bought a NCROPA badge to help publicise the cause.

*Approved by Members at General Meeting
6th February 1986*

*Signed: Edward A.C. Goodman
Chairman of Meeting.*