

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

~~CENSORED~~

FIGHTING SEXUAL CENSORSHIP

NCROPA IN ACTION

JUN '91 - MAY '92

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NCROPA IN ACTION

A BRIEF RESUME OF JUST SOME ITEMS FROM THE NCROPA DIARY

4th June '91 12,000 copies of a 'rap' record by the U.S. group "Niggas with Attitude" were seized by Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications Squad from the Chadwell Heath, Essex warehouse of the U.K. distributors Island Records.

17th June '91 Letter to Sir Peter Imbert, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, protesting about the seizure of 12,000 "Niggas with Attitude" records on 'obscenity' grounds. The record was freely available on the continent of Europe and in the U.S.A. (although the Florida State authorities had tried, unsuccessfully, to ban it.) Copies of letter sent to Home Secretary, Kenneth Baker MP, the Chairman of Island Records Ltd, and to the group themselves.

12th June '91 Members General Meeting held at the Conway Hall, London.

13th June '91 Six sexually-explicit lesbian videos which writer Jenny White had imported by post from the U.S.A., were ordered to be forfeited at Thames Magistrates' Court, London. Ms. White had challenged their seizure by H.M. Customs & Excise, in civil proceedings.

27th June '91 NCROPA Director, David Webb, unsuccessfully challenged a similar seizure by H.M. Customs of six sexually-explicit videos in a civil hearing at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court. The six videos had been seized at Heathrow Airport when the Director brought them back from a visit to Holland on 14th November 1990. (The Director had subsequently been arrested, strip-searched and then driven, under escort of five customs officers who were joined en route by two Metropolitan Police officers from the Obscene Publications Dept, to his home which was searched and from which video-tapes and 8mm Home Movies were seized, together with two copies of a 1978 Customs Directive issued to customs officers about what and what not to seize from passengers. He had also been refused access to his solicitor Ted Goodman on the grounds that Ted Goodman was a member of the NCROPA's Committee!).

The hearing lasted all day and David Webb conducted his own case. The magistrates viewed extracts from only two of the seized videos and even these in the fast-forward mode. They refused to allow in evidence the Customs Directive which their solicitor had objected to on the grounds that it was a 'secret' document. An appeal has subsequently been launched against the magistrates' ruling by way of Judicial Review in the High Court. A date for the hearing has yet to be fixed.

After the Uxbridge Court proceedings, H.M. Customs returned all the seized items from David Webb's flat apart from the two copies of the Customs Directive. Since there are plenty of other copies around in the public domain, and have been for the past 15 years, this is of little consequence. The magistrates' ruling on its admissibility, however, will form part of the Director's High Court challenge.

A number of NCROPA supporters attended the hearing at Uxbridge but were, like David Webb, especially angered by the magistrates decision to clear the Court for the screening of the tapes.

If the outcome of the High Court hearing is unsatisfactory, David is prepared to pursue the case through the European Courts where appropriate. THIS WILL ONLY BE POSSIBLE WITH FINANCIAL BACKING FOR LEGAL COSTS. ANYONE WILLING TO HELP, SHOULD THE NEED ARISE, PLEASE CONTACT THE DIRECTOR.

27th June '91 A large, double-page article was published in the "Daily Mail" headlined "Open House for the Merchants of Porn". Written in typical, sensat-

lonalist, neo-hysterical, sanctimonious "Daily Mail" style by Geoffrey Levy and David Gardner (presumably writing to order) it was a call to the Conservatives to include reform of the obscenity laws in their General Election manifesto. Not surprisingly it featured the highly subjective, pro-censorship propagandist views of Superintendent Michael Hames, Head of the Obscene Publications Dept. at Scotland Yard, fulminating about juries' verdicts amongst other things equally outside his legitimate responsibilities as a law enforcer - and not a law maker, or interpreter.

30th June '91 The "Daily Mail" reported that the Home Office had said that British companies circulating 'pornography' through home computer networks would be prosecuted. Successful prosecutions (for the police, that is!) have indeed been pursued.

2nd Jul '91 Letter to the editor of the "Daily Mail" in response to the article in their 27th June edition. The letter suggested that there were three lessons which Supt. Hames would do well to learn before shooting his mouth off about the perils of 'pornography' - (1) 'sex' is a natural "addiction" and is supposed to be that way; (2) like beauty, 'obscenity' is in the eye of the beholder and can thus only be evaluated subjectively; and (3) it is no business of a police officer to involve himself in political matters, but merely to implement the law as it is, by Parliament presently constituted. The letter refuted the article's suggestion that the draconian suppression of sexual material was supported by the majority of "the people". Needless to say, the letter was not published.

3rd Jul '91 In his final press conference before retiring as a judge, James Pickles said (according to the Law Society's Gazette 3/7/91) that "the laws on drugs, pornography and prostitution were in drastic need of liberalisation."

10th Jul '91 The Director of Public Prosecutions decided not to prosecute Channel 4 TV over their "Banned" season screening of "Sex and the Censors" and "W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism".

11th Jul '91 Letter from the Home Office in reply to my letter of 18th June to the Home Secretary about the seizure of the "Niggas with Attitude" record. It said that the Crown Prosecution Service was deciding whether or not to prosecute, and then went on patronisingly to list the provisions of the Obscene Publications Act, as if, after 15 years, the NCROPA needed any explanation!

9th Aug '91 Letter to Mr. Chong Won Kwak, President of the Korea Ethics Committee for the Performing Arts in Seoul, South Korea, in response to a request for help from the British Council who had, in turn, been approached for help from the British Ambassador in Seoul. South Korea was, apparently, in the process of formulating a future code of practice for publishing and the performing arts and wanted to know about other countries' ways of operating. The NCROPA's letter, which was sent direct to Mr. Chong Won Kwak to avoid any possible 'doctoring' by the British authorities en route, explained that in no way would we wish to recommend that Korea should follow the U.K.'s totally unacceptable and draconian state censorship restraints imposed by repressive laws. We included a copy of the NCROPA's promotional leaflet so that the kind of situation we would wish for here could be ascertained. Copies sent to the Korean Ambassador in London, the U.K. Ambassador in Seoul and the Deputy Director of the British Council in Seoul.

15th Aug '91 In an article in the "Daily Telegraph" reporting that Mary Whitehouse had asked the D.P.P. to prosecute the publishers of "Juliette" by the Marquis de Sade, Mrs. Whitehouse revealed that she had had a letter from the Prime Minister, John Major, "expressing support" for her campaign for the reform of the Obscene Publications Acts. His letter said:-

"...we remain prepared to support further reforms of the law in this area if there seems likely to be sufficient consensus and support in Parliament. This Government strongly supports the objective of improving standards in

published and broadcast material and entirely shares your concern about pornographic material and its possible effects."

22nd Aug '91 Letter to Sue Evison, journalist in "The Sun", who had written an article in the 15th Aug. edition about "The Chippendales" (the all-male, exotic U.S. dance group) in which she constantly referred to them as "strippers". Why, the letter asked, was this so when the Chippendales never 'stripped', but always kept their genitals covered? Copy sent to the company manager of "The Chippendales" at the Strand Theatre London.

22nd Aug '91 Letter to Andrew Graham-Yooll, editor of "Index on Censorship", protesting about an article by David Hollbrook and for, yet again (he had previously done the same for Catherine Itzin) affording column space for the views of someone so manifestly opposed to true 'freedom of expression', when the publication claims to be "The International Magazine for Free Expression". David Hollbrook's letters and articles fanatically deploring sexually-orientated publications have been regularly appearing in national newspapers and elsewhere for many years.

24th Aug '91 Former Judge James Pickles, writing in "The Sun" and berating Mary Whitehouse for demanding that "Juliette" be prosecuted, said "I am against censorship. Adults should be free to read what they like. I know of no evidence of anyone being 'corrupted' - whatever that means - by a book".

28th Aug '91 Manchester Magistrates Court found the novel "Lord Horror" by David Britton (about a fictionalised courtship between Jessie Matthews and Lord Haw-Haw (traitor William Joyce) "obscene". Publisher Michael Savy Books is to appeal against this extraordinary verdict.

31st Aug '91 More than 4000 "Lord Horror" and "Meng & Ecker" satirical comics were seized by Manchester Police from Savy Books Manchester, three days after the magistrates hearing against the "Lord Horror" book.

18th Sep '91 In Amsterdam, Holland, the Director had a meeting with the celebrated U.S. gay film producer and director William Hays, who is now resident there. The Director heard at first hand the somewhat worrying turn of events in the U.S. through increased antagonistic and harassing police activity against the publishers of sexually explicit material there since the advent of Reagan and Bush. The U.S.A. was still, mercifully, miles away from the level of repression and suppression we have to endure here in the U.K., however.

24th Sep '91 Letter to "The Guardian" about the 'Operation Spanner' convictions in December 1990. Not published.

24th Sep '91 Letter to "The Times" about the 'Operation Spanner' convictions in December 1990. Not published.

24th Sep '91 Letter to "The Independent" about the 'Operation Spanner' convictions in December 1990. Not published.

Here is the text of the unpublished letter to the three newspapers:-

"Dear Editor,

Before a stadium audience of 15000 and millions more world-wide television viewers, two boxers savagely, consentingly assault each other, one rendering the other's life in the balance and both requiring hospital admission.

In the privacy of their own homes, 15 men minimally, consentingly assault each other, none of whom require any medical attention.

Whereas the boxers are praised, eulogised and idolised, the 15 men are arrested,

prosecuted and convicted of 'heinous' crimes, and eight of them are given prison sentences (at the Old Bailey 'Operation Spanner' S/M trial in December last year) of up to 4 1/2 years. Why?

No, I am not calling for boxing to be outlawed for those who freely and, in my view, stupidly, choose to box, but merely questioning why the same 'freedom of choice' should not be afforded those who similarly choose to consent to assaults on themselves, albeit assaults motivated by sexual desire rather than aggressive machismo and financial gain?

Yours sincerely, & etc."

- 25th Sep '91 The Director was interviewed by Denis Campbell of "Time Out" magazine.
- 25th Sep '91 Isabel Koprowski was one of the guest speakers at a meeting organised by "Feminists Against Censorship" at Conway Hall, London. The subject was "Pornography: What do Women Want?"
- 27th Sep '91 Further letter to Air Commodore Davies, Chairman of the R.A.F. Club Piccadilly, London, asking for a reply to the Director's letter of 5th March about allowing the Club to be used by the anti-freedom National Viewers and Listeners Association for their A.G.M. (As reported in the previous edition of "NCROPA in Action".)
- 1st Oct '91 Letter from Peter Owen, General Manager and Secretary of the R.A.F. Club in reply to the Director's letters of 5th Mar. and 27th Sept., saying that the NVALA function was booked and sponsored by a Club member but that the Club is impartial to the activities of its members. (Interesting to note that the NVALA function has not been held there since!)
- 9th Oct '91 The Director attended a 'fringe' meeting of the Conservative Party Conference held by Mary Whitehouse and the NVALA in Blackpool. Mrs. Whitehouse began the meeting by showing excerpts from two programmes screened by Channel 4 TV in their "Banned" Season - "Sex and the Censors" and "W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism". The Director confronted Mrs. W. about many points she so predictably raised in her all-too-familiar diatribe. A number of those present expressed their support for the Director and the views of the NCROPA and several of these have since joined the campaign.
- 10th Oct '91 The Director attended a second 'fringe' meeting of the NVALA at Blackpool which was addressed by Superintendent Michael Hames, Head of Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications Dept. David Webb challenged Supt. Hames' participation in the meeting which was, he said, in contravention of Police Regulations which expressly forbid a member of a police force from engaging in "any activity which is likely to interfere with the impartial discharge of his duties or which is likely to give rise to the impression amongst members of the public that it may so interfere; and in particular a member of a police force shall not take any active part in politics." David Webb read out this part of the Regulations to the Superintendent who, in reply, said that he did not accept that he was breaking it, but that in any case he had been given permission to take part by Sir Peter Imbert, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner himself. Mrs. Whitehouse confirmed that Sir Peter had O.K.'d it. The Director pointed out, however, that neither Sir Peter nor anyone else had the authority to over-ride Police Regulations which were effectively part of the law and the law applied to Supt. Hames as much as anyone else.
- After the meeting David Webb recorded an interview for media students from Lancaster University.
- 10th Oct '91 Later that evening the Director attended another 'fringe' meeting and reception held by the Stonewall Group and the Conservative Group for Homosexual Equality at the Clarendon Hotel. The Director spoke

at this meeting and was loudly applauded when he reported his earlier visit to Mrs. Whitehouse's meeting and then condemned the reluctance of MPs - even those known to be in sympathy with the NCROPA's aims - to stand up fearlessly in Parliament and be counted - MPs like Sir John Wheeler who had a long time ago written to the Director to proffer his unsolicited support for the NCROPA philosophy but who still nevertheless subsequently voted for such appalling pro-censorship legislative measures as the 1984 Video Recordings Act. The meeting was chaired by former Conservative MP Matthew Parris. He is another public proclaimer against censorship, but who also voted for the Video Recordings Act when in Parliament (indeed, like Sir John, he served as a member of the Standing Committee on the Video recordings Bill during its passage through Parliament, and during which he made some very uncomplimentary comments about the NCROPA. They are recorded in "Hansard"). He has also recently (in November 1992) become a member of the loathsome Broadcasting Standards Council. How he can reconcile that with an opposition to censorship is difficult to know. Perhaps the £10,000 a year salary for a minimal amount of work helps.

- 10th Oct '91 Supt. Leslie Bennett, the former Head of Scotland Yard's Obscene Publications Dept. (Supt. Hames' predecessor) was convicted at Bow Street Magistrates' Court London of an offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 and fined £150 with £250 costs. He had illegally used the Police computer to obtain information about his former wife's new man friend. The Metropolitan Police have subsequently refused to tell the Director what, if any, police disciplinary action has been taken against Supt. Bennett and whether he is still serving in the police force. It was Supt. Bennett, you may remember, who was publicly exposed in the "Sunday Mirror" on 18th Feb. 1990 as an ex-member of "Cumbrians Anonymous" and loved dressing up in women's clothes (and why not?). They published photographs to prove it. (See the last edition of "NCROPA in Action".)
- 9th Oct '91 "Time Out" published an article by Denis Campbell about Supt. Hames and the Metropolitan Police Obscene Publications Squad which featured the views of the Director, David Webb, and about Hames' lack of impartiality in carrying out his job, viz. the Hames/Whitehouse connection and his regular appearances at NVALA meetings and functions.
- 14th Oct '91 "The Guardian", reporting a Cambridge Crown Court trial, said that the BBC TV programme "Crimewatch" "inspired two masked raiders to hold up 11 banks and building societies with a water pistol" and in which more than £30,000 was stolen. One of the presenters of "Crimewatch" is W.P.C. Jacqui Hames, the wife of Supt. Michael Hames.
- 16th Oct '91 Letter to Sir Richard Attenborough, Chairman of Channel 4 TV, reporting that Mary Whitehouse had screened excerpts of two Channel 4 programmes at her Blackpool meetings.
- 19th Oct '91 Malcolm Rifkind, the Transport Secretary, launched a campaign to cut child road accident deaths and injuries. In 1990 nearly 50,000 children up to the age of 15 were killed or injured by motor vehicles - 417 died and 8870 were seriously hurt. In a society where sexually-explicit publications for consenting adults are banned for everyone, chiefly on the flimsy pretext that they might harm children if they accidentally saw them, is it not scandalous that the Government does not immediately impose a blanket ban on all motor vehicles, which quite incontrovertibly cause the same children such proven, widespread carnage?
- 21st Oct '91 Letter to Sir Peter Imbert, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, asking if he really did give Supt. Hames permission to speak at the NVALA 'fringe' meeting at the Tory Party Conference in Blackpool on 10th October.
- 14th Oct '91 David Webb was interviewed by Douglas Cameron on LBC Talkback Radio's morning programme.

- 15th Oct '91 Tuppy Owens gave a talk to a 'Feminists Against Censorship' open meeting at Conway Hall, London on "What Women Want from Pornography". The general consensus of the 70-strong female audience was that women wanted to have 'hard-core', 'turn-on' sexually explicit material.
- 16th Oct '91 The Director was interviewed by Mark Edmonds of Marie Claire magazine.
- 5th Nov '91 Letter from Colin Leventhal, Director of Acquisitions at Channel 4 TV, in reply to my letter of 16th Oct. to Sir Richard Attenborough, who was abroad. He thought the new 1988 Copyright Act would seem to permit the screening of small excerpts of programmes for the purposes of criticism and review. He affirmed, however, Channel 4 TV "is opposed to any form of piracy or infringement of copyright."
- 5th Nov '91 Letter to Lord Hailsham deploring his call in the House of Lords on 22nd Oct. for the BBC not to televise "The Last Temptation of Christ" because "it might offend many people's feelings" and if it did so it would be behaving in an "irresponsible way". The letter said that, if TV companies only transmitted programmes which did not offend anyone's feelings, they would never transmit anything. The Director, who had seen the film at the invitation of the M.D. of the British distributing company on its release here, told Lord Hailsham that he had found it in no way 'offensive', merely boring - so much so that he had twice fallen asleep. The only reason he would not want "The Last Temptation of Christ" screened would be in the hope that it might be replaced by something more worth watching, like "The Last Tango in Paris", or "The Last Exit to Brooklyn" - or even "The Last of the Mohicans".
- 5th Nov '91 Letter to Lord Tannpandy (former Speaker of the House of Commons) deploring his call, in the House of Lords on 22nd Oct., for the BBC not to televise "The Last Temptation of Christ" because, he said, it would be "deeply offensive to the 70% (?) of people in Britain who regarded themselves as Christian."
- 5th Nov '91 Letter to Lord Orr-Ewing deploring his call, in the House of Lords on 22nd Oct., for the BBC not to televise "The Last Temptation of Christ" because, he said, it would be "deeply offensive to the 70% (?) of people in Britain who regarded themselves as Christian."
- 6th Nov '91 Hand-written reply from Lord Hailsham to my letter of 5th Nov. stating that my "argument is ridiculous as well as being self-contradictory". "No question of censorship or self-expression arises", he wrote, "what ever that is supposed to mean. The fact that the film sent the Director nodding off casts doubt on your (his) ability to claim that it is void of offensive matter", he wrote. Maybe at 84 a coherent reply is expecting too much. Still, at least he did reply!
- 11th Nov '91 Letter to "The Guardian" criticising Nicholas de Jongh's article about the 1971 "OZ" trial ("In those crazy old days of OZ" - "The Guardian" 9/11/91) for its complacent assertion that the taboos against which the defendants in that trial rallied "have lost their salience" and that "we have come on" since then. The letter's theme was that the iniquitous Obscene Publications Acts were still very much with us and still being rigidly implemented 20 years after "OZ". Apart from the O.P. Acts, since 1971 no less than twelve additional statutes have been enacted by Parliament to add to the State censor's already prolific legal armory.
- 13th Nov '91 Letter from Commander David Stevens of the Metropolitan Police, in reply to my letter to the Commissioner of 21st October. He said that Supt. Hames attended and addressed the NVAIA (Mary Whitehouse) meeting in Blackpool on 10th October "with the full knowledge and support of the Metropolitan

Police Service." In answer to the Director's question about disciplinary action against Supt. Leslie Bennett, the letter said that "such proceedings are confidential and not open to discussion".

- 15th Nov '91 Letters sent to all 20 MPs drawn in the House of Commons ballot for Private Members' Bills, commending to them an enclosed copy of the NCROPA's 'Freedom of Expression' Bill and asking them to introduce such a Bill, or one like it, in Parliament.
- 15th Nov '91 Tuppy Owens was a guest in "The James Whale Radio Show" on Yorkshire TV, discussing the rights of disabled people to have sex.
- 16th Nov '91 Letter from The Director was published in "The Pink Paper" welcoming the publication of Peter Tatchell's draft 'Sexually Explicit Images Bill' but pointing out that the NCROPA had its own draft reforming anti-censorship Bill (our 'Freedom of Expression' Bill) and had been promoting it amongst MPs (especially those successful in the Sessional ballots for Private Members' Bills) for the past 15 years.
- 21st Nov '91 NCROPA Committee Meeting held at Conway Hall, London.
- 22nd Nov '91 Stephanie Anne Lloyd and Raiko Ristic of Salford, were both jailed for twelve months and fined £3000 at Manchester Crown Court for publishing "obscene" videos.
- 26th Nov '91 Letter from Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, thanking the Director for suggesting the NCROPA's 'Freedom of Expression' Bill (he was 14th in the Private Members' Bills Ballot) but explaining that he had decided on a national-health-related Bill - "although I am in sympathy with your organisation's aims", he wrote. (Most of the other MPs successful in the ballot had also written mostly explaining that they had chosen Bills on other subjects.)
- 29th Nov '91 The NCROPA's submission to the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice was delivered. The main points of our submission are as follows:-
- Reversal of the formerly generally accepted burden-of-proof of guilt in criminal proceedings on the prosecution, in a number of Acts e.g. (1) The Obscene Publications Act 1959; (2) The Customs Consolidation Act 1876; (3) The Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Orders for the confiscation of the proceeds of an offence).
 - The double, triple, quadruple and even quintuple jeopardy risk in so-called "obscene" publications cases.
 - The omission or removal of any 'guilty intent' proof requirement by the prosecution (the Protection of Children Act 1978 as amended)
 - The lack of proper public accountability of the police.
 - The secrecy of police disciplinary measures and hearings
 - The urgent need for a completely independent Police Complaints investigative machinery
 - Above all, the need for the repeal of much of our criminal law (especially that relating to so-called "obscene" or "indecent" publications) as the best way to improve criminal justice in this country.
- (COPIES OF THE SUBMISSION ARE AVAILABLE PRICE £3.00, POST FREE)
- 30th Nov '91 In his regular column in "The Sun", former Judge James Pickles attack-

ed the twelve months prison sentence on Stephanie Lloyd awarded by Manchester Crown Court on 22nd Nov. "This is much too severe", he wrote. "Adults are not alarmed about watching dirty videos. It is wrong to ruin her life when she did no harm. The Appeal Court should release her."

1st Dec '91 Letter from the Director published in "Gay Times" welcoming Peter Tatchell's support for the reform of the O.P. Acts and the publication of his draft Bill, but drawing attention to the fact that the NCROPA has been promoting such specific alternative legislation since it was founded in 1976.

3rd Dec '91 Letter to David Bove, MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament Committee of Inquiry into Drugs and Crime in whose report he stated that "the Committee wants to see a balance between the repression of drugs and the rights of the individual". The NCROPA's letter asked the Committee members now to address themselves to the "rights of the individual" concerning sexually explicit material - and more accurately to the complete absence of such rights in the United Kingdom.

4th Dec '91 Letter from Ivan Lawrence, MP thanking the Director for his congratulations on coming first in the Private Members' Bills Ballot, but saying that he was adopting a National Lotteries Bill. Somewhat enigmatically, however, he added in his own hand-writing "Good luck elsewhere".

13th Dec '91 An animal rights activist was cleared of a charge of outraging public decency by committing an indecent act with a dolphin called 'Freddie' in Northumberland, by Newcastle-upon-Tyne Crown Court. Some people in a boat had complained that he masturbated Freddie's penis as they swam together in Amble harbour.

17th Dec '91 Letter from David Bove MEP in reply to the Director's letter of 3rd Dec. The Committee of Inquiry into Drugs Trafficking, of which he was chairman, had a limited remit only, and could not, therefore, expand on that and extend their deliberations to sexually explicit material, as the Director had requested.

20th Dec '91 The D.P.P. decided not to prosecute the publishers (Arrow Books) of the Marquis de Sade's novel "Juliette".

9th Jan '92 The Director was interviewed by Angela Rippon on LBC Talkback Radio.

21st Jan '92 The Director was interviewed by Stuart Marshall (producer) and Chris Woods (presenter) from Mayavision for their forthcoming programme on the Metropolitan Police Obscene Publications Dept.

24th Jan '92 At the request of the organisers, a supply of NCROPA promotional leaflets was sent for display at the Birmingham University Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Association 'Awareness Event'.

24th Jan '92 The Crown Prosecution Service dropped charges against a man possessing a gay safer-sex poster, imported from Germany, which depicted two naked men engaged in oral sex with the caption (originally in German) "sucking is safe but pull out before you come". H.M. Customs had previously confiscated copies of the poster sent to 'Gay Switchboard', the information and help line.

31st Jan '92 "Private Eye" reported that staff at a branch of Boots the Chemists had publicly censured and rebuked two of their customers for sending photographs of a baby to them for processing which they busy-bodilying and impudently disapproved of. The photographs were of a 10 weeks old baby daughter of a couple, a victim of 'cot-death' syndrome. The parents had taken the "simple, quiet and dignified photographs as their only record of their daughter." "The climate of Rantzenism", said the 'Eye', "has now reached the photographic department of Boots."

31st Jan '92 David Webb appeared in person before Judge Bathurst Norman at Isle-

worth Crown Court to make representations for a late application for an appeal hearing against the findings of the Uxbridge Magistrates on 27th June 1991, regarding his civil case with H.M. Customs & Excise. A NCROPA benefactor had very kindly offered financial help to provide the Director with legal representation by recommended Counsel. After consulting this 'learned' Counsel, it transpired that his advice had been totally wrong in law, as was confirmed by Judge Bathurst Norman. (Needless to say Mr. Webb refused to pay the inefficient Counsel one penny of his claimed fees. The offending barrister has subsequently accepted that he was wrong and has withdrawn his demand for payment of fees.)

3rd Feb '92 Letter to Barry Sheerman, MP, a Labour Shadow Home Affairs Minister, requesting a copy of a speech he made wherein he called for a decency charter, which, he alleged, would protect the young and vulnerable in our society. He said in the speech: "You don't have to be Mary Whitehouse to feel that in many ways we live in a 'Cesspit Society', a society swamped by crime and criminality, saturated with pornography, where public and private corruption are increasingly accepted as our way of life." (David Webb Comments: Mr. Sheerman is MP for Huddersfield. If Huddersfield society is now "saturated with pornography", it is (a) completely untypical of the whole of the rest of the U.K., (b) completely changed from when I was last there, and (c) if that is so, a heaven-sent improvement on what used to be, in my view, one of the most depressing places it has ever been my misfortune to visit - as anyone who ever played the old Palace Theatre Huddersfield will readily confirm!)

12th Feb '92 Tuppy Owens addressed a meeting of 'Feminists Against Censorship' at Conway Hall, London on the subject "What is Pornography? - My Career and How I've Been Censored".

17th Feb '92 Letter to the French Ambassador, H.E. Mons. Bernard Dorin, asking for verification of the accuracy of a report transmitted on the BBC Ceefax television service on 16th Jan. that the French budget ministry had "slapped a 50% tax on pornographic telephone services, with the aim of forcing them out of business."

17th Feb '92 Letter to the Finnish Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Ilkka Pastinen, asking for verification of the accuracy of a report transmitted on the ITV Oracle television service on 27th Jan. that "Helsinki police are investigating new topless bars to check whether they affront decency laws."

19th Feb '92 The Court of Appeal upheld the Old Bailey convictions, in December 1990, of the five jailed defendants in the 'Operation Spanner' S/M trial, although their sentences were reduced. The men were given leave to appeal to the House of Lords.

26th Feb '92 Letter from the Third Secretary at the French Embassy in reply to the Director's letter to the Ambassador of 17th Feb. The letter stated that the 50% tax on 'pornographic' telephone services in France was not aimed at forcing them out of business (as BBC Ceefax had stated) and nor does it mean "an interdiction of the business or a censorship exercised on it and it does not prevent anyone from carrying out their activity (of providing these services)."

26th Feb '92 Letter to the Prime Minister, John Major, MP. The full text of this important letter follows:

"Dear Prime Minister,

In your address to the Conservative Party Conference at Blackpool on 11th October last year, you said:-

"I want to give individuals greater control over their own lives."

You went on to say:-

"That is our programme for the 90s. I will put it in a single phrase: the power to choose - and the right to own."

and you further enlarged on that by affirming that:-

".....choice is something most of us can be trusted with."

It was with great surprise and concern, therefore, that, only three weeks later, according to the 1st November edition of "The Daily Telegraph", you had written to Michael Alison, MP, the Second (Parliamentary) Church Estates Commissioner, indicating Government support for a possible commitment to the inclusion in the forthcoming Conservative Party Election Manifesto of measures to strengthen the present so-called "obscene" publications legislation and, in particular, the 1959 Obscene Publications Act.

The United Kingdom's present "obscene" publications legislation is indisputably the most draconian State censorship legislation of its kind anywhere in the so-called 'free' world. This now even includes many countries from the former Communist 'Eastern Bloc', like East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, who have swiftly and eagerly rid themselves of the kind of viciously repressive State censorship laws to which the U.K., now almost alone, is still subject, and rapidly aligned themselves with the truly free Western World countries, in particular with this country to retain its present intolerable level of authoritarian, State censorship where the people's "power to choose" and "right to own" is categorically denied them, is alarming enough, but that there are those like Mr. Alison who wish to repress sexually the British people still further is, frankly, frightening and quite beyond my comprehension.

'Sex' and the pursuit of sexual gratification is, and always has been, a perfectly natural, instinctive, human phenomenon. That publications (pictures, books, magazines, films, videos, etc.) about 'sex' and matters sexual should attract the same enthusiastic interest is, thus, also perfectly natural. Such publications for consenting adults are not, and have never been proved to be, in themselves harmful, as the 1979 Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship and the 1990 Home Office Research Review "Pornography: Impacts and Influences" both found. In fact quite the reverse is true. They are most certainly harmless, but also, in many instances, positively helpful in solving sexual problems, in sexual development and education, or simply and unapologetically in providing a suitable stimulant to aid masturbation, which relieves sexual tension and natural desire in a highly enjoyable and non-threatening way (the safety-valve effect).

If all the other countries I have already referred to find no need to 'protect' their citizens by proscribing such sexually-explicit material, and instead afford them "the power to choose and the right to own", why should the U.K., virtually alone, still persist in so doing?

If you and your fellow Conservatives really wish the voters to believe that you are committed to the freedom of the individual, freedom of choice and the freedom of the market-place - including, of course, the "genuine single market, open for business right across the Community" which you trumpeted so loudly in your Blackpool speech - you will include in your Election Manifesto a commitment, not to strengthening the obscene publications acts, but to repealing them.

You said in your Blackpool speech that you are "always ready to listen to new ideas." The idea of 'freedom of expression' as an inalienable human right is, of course, not a new idea. It was included in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights way back in 1948 and long before that, of course, in the United States of America Constitution when added in 1791 as the First

Amendment; and in 1953 it was included in the European Convention on Human Rights. However, to many in this ever growingly authoritarian country, including shamefully many in the Conservative Party, 'freedom of expression' is an apparently unheard-of concept. The National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA) very much hopes that you are not among these depressing people, that you really mean it when you say you are "always ready to listen", that you will 'see-off' the Michael Allison's, the Mary Whitehouses, the puritans and god-botherers, the State-nannyists, and that totally unrepresentative but vociferous small army of self-appointed guardians of the nation's morals, and that you will, at long last, bring some humanitarian common-sense to this very vexed, but absurdly over-emotionalised issue of sexual freedom. There are many votes in it and the NCROPA will be urging its supporters - and there are millions! - to vote only for those who promise to restore what is ours as of right, viz our freedom to choose, or, in your own words, "the power to choose - and the right to own".

Yours sincerely, & etc.

19th Feb '92 Thousands of articles (magazines, greetings cards, T-shirts etc.) were seized in a raid by Manchester Police on the Manchester branch of "Clone Zone", on the grounds that they were allegedly "obscene". Most of the items seized are widely and freely available for sale elsewhere throughout the country, including 'High Street' newsagents' shops. The grisly spirit of Anderson apparently lives on in the Manchester Constabulary!

1st Mar '92 NCROPA Press and News Media Release issued headlined "Urgent Plea to Prime Minister for Manifesto Commitment to Abolish State Censorship and Legalise 'Pornography'". A copy of the Director's letter (of 26th Feb.) was enclosed with the release.

2nd Mar '92 Letter to the Managing Director of BBC Ceefax with copies of the NCROPA correspondence between the Director and the French Embassy re their item on French 'pornographic' telephone lines, on 16th Jan., pointing out that their report was incorrect and asking for an explanation.

3rd Mar '92 Letter to Christopher Patten, MP, Chairman of the Conservative Party urging that a commitment to 'freedom of expression' and the repeal of the O.P. Acts be included in their forthcoming Election Manifesto. Similar letters were sent also to Mrs. Gillian Sheppard, MP, and Sir John Cope, MP, joint vice-chairmen of the Conservative Party.

8th Mar '92 "The Sunday Telegraph" reported the opening of Russia's first sex-shop.

8th Mar '92 The newspaper "Sunday Sport" published the NCROPA's Press Release of 1st March, about the forthcoming election, the Conservative Party and the O.P. Acts, in its entirety, headlined "Why free sex makes sense to me".

9th Mar '92 Linzi Drew, the former editor of "Penthouse" magazine, and her partner Lindsay Honey were both convicted at Guildford Crown Court of charges brought under the O.P. Acts, for selling sexually-explicit video-cassettes by mail-order. Ms. Drew was given a 4 months prison sentence and Mr. Honey a 9 months sentence.

10th Mar '92 Letter to Sir John Wheeler, MP, Chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, House of Commons, enclosing a copy of the Director's letter to the P.M. of 26th Feb. and asking for his support.

10th Mar '92 Letter to Nicholas Scott MP (the Director's local Chelsea MP) expressing dismay at the Conservatives' appalling record re 'freedom of ex-

pression' matters throughout the past 13 years and urging his support for the aims of the NCROPA. A copy of the Director's letter to the P.M. dated 26th Feb. was enclosed.

11th Mar '92 Letter to Neil Kinnock MP, Leader of H.M. Opposition. The full text of this important letter follows:

"Dear Mr. Kinnock,

In 1976, when I was forming the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA), I wrote to you inviting you to become a founding member of its Executive Committee, because of your declared sympathies towards our aims and aspirations of freeing this country from the tyranny of censorship.

You replied on 16th February 1976 stating that you did uphold our views "and would happily associate myself with the Campaign." You did not feel, however, that you could take a very active part in our activities "simply because I have a fairly lengthy list of other preoccupations." But you went on to say:-

"However, you can count on my support in the House of Commons if we should ever arrive at the state of amending the current Obscene Publications Legislation."

Sixteen years and four Governments later (three of them, for the past thirteen years, Conservative) the Obscene Publications Legislation is not only as firmly in place as ever, but has been extended to include cinema films and, by virtue of the Broadcasting Act 1990, television and radio also. Notwithstanding this prolific extension of its provisions, a number of other legislative measures have also been subsequently enacted by Parliament - e.g. the appalling Video Recordings Act 1984, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, the Cinematograph (Amendment) Act 1982, as amended by the Cinemas Act 1985 - which, in various ways, add still more state censorship restrictions and prohibitions, and most astonishing of all, many politicians constantly cry out for even more repressive censorship legislation and the strengthening of our present draconian "obscene" publications laws!

It is an indisputable fact that the U.K. currently has more state censorship - certainly sexual censorship - than virtually all other European Community countries, than most other so-called 'free' Western World countries, and now, even, than many additional countries from the former Communist Eastern-Bloc régimes (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, East Germany, etc.).

This is a wholly intolerable situation in what is laughingly described as a 'free society', and, moreover, a country which is a signatory to the right to 'freedom of expression' enshrined in both the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the European Convention on Human Rights (1953).

Although much of the strong backing for the draconian state censorship legislation the UK presently imposes on its citizens undoubtedly comes from the ranks of the extreme right wing of the Conservative Party, who quite disgracefully and hypocritically claim to be supporters of a Party philosophy based on 'freedom-of-the-individual', there is, very regrettably, also a disturbingly significant faction within the Labour Party which shares and supports their anti-libertarian views. At the centre of this faction is what the NCROPA regards as 'the unacceptable face of feminism' - those women politicians who seek to suppress (censor) by force of law any form of sexual expression of which they personally do not approve. That is a form of tyranny which does your Party no credit, your Party's cause much damage, and your Party's potential vote great harm. Whilst the NCROPA welcomes the Lab-

our Party's concern for equal rights and opportunities, it condemns any 'unequal' and inappropriate special discriminatory approach to the control of sexual publications, of the kind promulgated in your policy document "A New Ministry for Women". We believe the Labour Party has not really thought this through properly and should be very careful indeed before it commits itself to legal curbs on the freedom of expression simply to appease a comparatively small but unrepresentative group of militant, dictatorial extreme feminists.

The NCROPA will be advising its supporters - and there are millions! - to vote only for those candidates who support the general removal of the UK's intolerable present censorship restrictions, which will bring us into line with the rest of our European partners, where true 'freedom-of-expression' prevails and where consenting adults are free as-of-right to choose for themselves what they see, read and hear.

You have already told us that you agree with our philosophy and aims. Please now, therefore, use the influence of your prestigious position as Party Leader to persuade any dissenters, and publicly back us by including a firm commitment in your Election Manifesto to ridding this increasingly depressing and repressed country of the curse of state censorship. There are, I assure you, many votes in this but they will only be cast for your Party's candidates, if your Party supports us!

Yours sincerely, & etc.

12th Mar '92 Letter from Graham Norwood, Editor of BBC CeeFax, in reply to the Director's letter of 2nd Mar. re the item about French 'pornographic' telephone lines. The editor said that their source for the story was the "normally-reliable" Associated Press International news agency. He apologised and said that he had taken up the matter with AP.

12th Mar '92 The Conservative Party Election Manifesto was published. In a Foreword by Prime Minister John Major he wrote:- "For I believe - strongly - that you, and not the Government, should be in charge of your life. That's what Conservatism stands for. That principle underlies all the policies in this Manifesto."

Almost unbelievably, in spite of this, however, on page 25, under a sub-heading "Pornography, Privacy, Libel", the Manifesto includes the following declarations:-

(1) "We have the toughest anti-pornography laws in Western Europe, and we will keep them that way."

and (2) "British domestic controls on pornography will remain in place even after the completion of the Single European Market."

13th Mar '92 NCROPA Press and News Release issued headlined "Call to NCROPA Supporter Neil Kinnock for Labour Commitment to Legalise 'Pornography'" A copy of the Director's letter to Neil Kinnock (dated 1st March) was enclosed with the release.

15th Mar '92 In their "You the Jury" poll, the "News of the World" reported that 72% were in favour of relaxing the U.K.'s "porn laws".

24th Mar '92 Letter from William Benyon, MP, in reply to the Director's letter of 26th February to the Prime Minister, John Major. The text of the letter was as follows:-

"Dear Mr. Webb,

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter dated 26th Feb-

ruary, to which he has asked me to reply. I do apologise for the delay in response.

This is of course the age old argument about when liberty becomes licence. By now you will have seen the commitment in the manifesto that we will keep our anti pornography laws and resist any attempt from Europe or elsewhere to relax them. We believe this is what the majority of the country wish.

Mr. Major much appreciates the trouble you have taken to let him have your views.

Yours sincerely,
William Denyon.

1st Apr '92 "Gay Times" published article about the issue of "obscene" publications, reform of the O.P. Acts and the General Election which featured the views of the NCROPA as set out in our letters to the two main political party leaders, John Major and Neil Kinnock.

2nd Apr '92 David Webb attended an Election Meeting held by Nicholas Scott, MP for Chelsea, at St. Luke's Hall Chelsea, where the theme of his address was 'Freedom of the Individual' and 'Freedom of Choice'. The NCROPA Director questioned him about Tory hypocrisy on this issue and how he reconciled what he'd said at the meeting with what 'Page 25' of the Conservative Party Manifesto said about "pornography"? The Director told a packed meeting that, as a 'consenting adult', he liked and wanted to have "pornography"; but where was his freedom to choose to have "pornography" when Mr. Scott's party was categorically denying him that right - a right that virtually all other European countries had as a matter of course? Perhaps surprisingly in a 'true-blue' constituency like Chelsea, Mr. Webb's comments were greeted with loud cheers and prolonged applause - or perhaps not?

9th Apr '92 General Election.

16th Apr '92 Christopher Berthoud, who worked for the National Film Theatre, was fined £600 plus costs of £400 for importing by post an allegedly "obscene" video of a Samurai warrior dismembering and decapitating an Asian girl. The most worrying aspect of this case is that the prosecution and the court both clearly regarded this video as a 'snuff movie', i.e. as if it were a film record of a real killing carried out for the purposes of the film! It was apparently so realistic that it had to be examined by forensic experts before it was realised that the 'victim' was a dummy. Hollywood, look out!

22nd Apr '92 Isabel Kiprowski was the subject of an in-depth feature article in "The Guardian" by Geraldine Bedell about her life, work and views, headed "The language of lust".

24th Apr '92 Vinson Pike, a computer-buff, was fined £1000 by Swindon magistrates after being convicted of four charges under the Obscene Publications Act 1959, for selling allegedly "pornographic" computer 'floppy disk' magazines. This is the first time the O.P. Act has been used against computer material.

29th Apr '92 The Director met Paul Orton, Chairman of "Clone Zone" stores, in Manchester to discuss the recent police raid on his store there on 19th February, when thousands of items were seized on a warrant issued under the provisions of Section 3 of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act. Mr. Orton expressed his wish to support the NCROPA and offered to display NCROPA promotional literature at his retail stores.

30th Apr '92 On behalf of the NCROPA, letters expressing sympathy and anger at their prosecution and imprisonment at Guildford Crown Court on 9th

March were sent to Linzi Drew and Lindsay Honey. (They have now both served their respective sentences and have been released).

5th May '92 Letter from Linzi Drew thanking the Director for his letter of 30th April. She had only 24 days more to serve of her prison sentence and was philosophical about her traumatic experience.

7th May '92 Police and Trading Standards Officers seized nearly 3000 "horror" videos in a series of raids across the country, in the North-West, the Midlands, South Wales, Kent and Cornwall. According to a report in "The Guardian" (8/5/92) the videos allegedly depicted scenes of torture, mutilation and cannibalism.

8th May '92 The Director was interviewed by Douglas Cameron on LBC Talkback Radio about so-called "video-nasties" and yesterday's police raids.

8th May '92 "The Guardian" reported that the British Home Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, MP, was "on a collision course with Brussels by refusing to accept an ultimatum that all European Community frontier controls be scrapped by the end of the year." The latest European Commission ruling stated that "This is a clear and straightforward objective. It imposes an obligation to produce results and leaves no margin of discretion. All controls must go, whatever their form and whatever their justification."

(IMPORTANT: The NCROPA would very much like to hear from anyone who is stopped and/or checked at European Community inner state frontiers by either Immigration, Police or Customs Officers after 31st December 1992, when the provisions of the Single European Act become fully operative and binding on the U.K.)

12th May '92 Letter from Lindsay Honey thanking the Director for his letter of 30th April which was "both encouraging and sympathetic". He received a 9 months sentence - 5 months longer than Linzi Drew - so, unfortunately he still had more time to serve.

15th May '92 Letter to Barbara Mills, CC, the new Director of Public Prosecutions (replacing Sir Allan Green, CC, who had resigned from the post after being arrested and cautioned by police in King's Cross, London for kerb-crawling (soliciting prostitutes) protesting about Mr. Paul Atkin, a member of the puritanical "Family and Youth Concern" Campaign (formerly 'The Responsible Society'), for reporting an item in a BBC TV "Jim'll Fix It" programme where a 7 year old boy (Mark Monaghan) had appeared in a light-hearted parody routine with the exotic male dance group "The Dreamboys". Mr. Atkin was reported in the "Daily Mail" (13th May) as saying "I was shocked that the BBC would contrive to present the sort of performance which would obviously have a great appeal to paedophiles." The Director's letter to the D.P.P. said that Mr. Atkins' complaint marked a new absurdity-low for the appallingly repressive, sanctimonious, nayivist, lousy-bodily "Family and Youth Concern" organisation and he trusted it would be treated with the contempt both it and those who made it deserve. Copies of letter sent to the BBC Director-General, Sir Jimmy Savile, Roger Ordish, the Producer of "Jim'll Fix It", the parents of the boy Mr. & Mrs. Monaghan, Paul Atkin and Dr. Stanley Ellison, Chairman of "Family and Youth Concern".

19th May '92 At a hearing in the High Court, London, before Lord Justice Beldam and Mr. Justice Laws, David Webb, the Director, was granted leave to proceed on an application for Judicial Review against the three Justices, who had refused Mr. Webb's appeal application for them to state a case to the High Court after their ruling, on 27th June 1991, that six video cassette tapes which he had imported from The Netherlands in November 1990 were "obscene", contrary to the provisions of the Customs Consolidation Act 1876, and ordering them to be forfeited. David Webb conducted his own case. A date for the High Court hearing is yet to be set.