

VIEWER AND LISTENER

VOTE FOR DECENCY!



Please raise these issues with your candidates!

The problems created by the weak and ineffective law on obscenity – the Obscene Publications Act 1959/64 – are now such that even the most depraved material is apparently beyond the reach of this law and available without let or hindrance in the country.

The latest in a long line of calamities associated with that office is the astonishing declaration by the Director of Public Prosecutions that there is “insufficient evidence” to initiate proceedings against ‘JULIETTE’ by the Marquis de Sade!

This book contains a multitude of obscenities which are briefly described in Mrs. Whitehouse’s letter to the Political Party Leaders (see inside).

Many Members of Parliament, in letters to National VALA, have expressed their horror and outrage at this inaction by the DPP and have taken the matter up forcefully with him.

WITH A GENERAL ELECTION IMMINENT, THE ISSUE OF OBSCENITY MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES WHO ARE SEEKING TO BE ELECTED.

We would urge you to contact each candidate in your constituency either personally or by attending local meetings asking the following questions:

- Bearing in mind the serious consequences of freely available pornography – the corruption of

minors, the breakdown of family life, the escalating sex crime statistics – would the candidates be willing, if elected, to promote/support any initiative in Parliament to tighten up the Obscene Publications Act 1959?

- Would the candidates “Maintain the Broadcasting Standards Council and strengthen its brief so as to curtail the swearing/blasphemy/sexually explicit/violent material currently being shown?” (For evidence of this see ‘MURDER AND MAYHEM’ and ‘DEBASEMENT OF LANGUAGE’ monitoring reports (BOOKSHELF) and

Summer and Autumn 1991 issues of *The Viewer and Listener*).

- Would the candidates “Support measures in Europe to prevent the transmission of obscene and pornographic material into Britain from the European Community and members of the Council of Europe?” (For evidence of this see ‘EURO-PORN ON BRITISH TV’).

Do let your local newspaper know what responses you receive.

FULL DETAILS OF NATIONAL VALA'S ANNUAL CONVENTION, AWARD PRESENTATION AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ARE INSIDE.

CAMPAIGN TO OUTLAW PORNOGRAPHY

PRESENTATION OF PETITION AT 10 DOWNING STREET

Well over 300,000 signatures on the COP petition have been sent to headquarters and these will now be presented at 10 Downing Street after the Election.

If you are still collecting names we think it important that you give them direct to your MP and demand action in Parliament to amend effectively the Obscene Publications Act without delay.

It would be a good idea to arrange a meeting with your MP to hand them over personally. Most Members hold a “surgery” in their constituencies on Friday evenings or Saturday mornings. This would make a good local interest story. Do tell your local paper of your plans – they may even like to take a photograph of the occasion! And don’t

forget your local radio station! With the General Election imminent this important issue should be brought to public notice.

WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK EVERYONE MOST WARMLY FOR ALL THE EFFORT THAT HAS BEEN PUT INTO MAKING THIS PETITION A SUCCESS DURING WHAT HAS NOT BEEN THE EASIEST OF TIMES. WE ARE PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL TO KAY AND STEVE STEVENS WHO HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE – A TREMENDOUS JOB – FOR SENDING OUT THE FORMS, COLLECTING AND COUNTING ALL THE SIGNATURES.

THE VIEWER AND LISTENER

SPRING 1992

ARDLEIGH, COLCHESTER, ESSEX, CO7 7RH.

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President: Mrs MARY WHITEHOUSE CBE

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NOW OR NEVER!

Since the Broadcasting Act 1990 brought broadcasting under the Obscene Publications Act, something for which NVALA had fought since its inception in 1964, television standards have plummeted!

It is very difficult to believe otherwise than that certain television professionals have deliberately "pushed out the boat" in calculated attempts to "normalise" language and behaviour which has previously been seen – and then only occasionally – in very late night/early morning films. In recent months the "four letter word" has become commonplace to the extent that it was used 35 times in the programme 'Bill Hicks – Relentless' (Channel 4, 2.1.92) and at least 200 times in 'Platoon' (BBC2, 30.12.91). Readers will no doubt remember VALA's publications, 'Debasement of Language' Nos 1 and 2 (see Bookshelf), which gave striking evidence of the increasing use of bad language on all channels.

What one can only describe as the scandal surrounding the transmission in January on BBC1 at 9pm – immediately after the end of family viewing time – of Melvyn Bragg's 'A time to dance' found TV critics, almost without exception, condemning its explicit and prolonged sex scenes in the first two episodes.

Elsewhere in this issue (back page) we have reprinted Richard Last's comments (*The Daily Telegraph* 27.1.92) on the series, and we found ourselves very much in agreement with his claim that fault lay with the producer and director because of their interpretation of Bragg's story rather than with the author himself.

However, all this serves to underline very forcibly the need for effective obscenity legislation. National VALA has written to the political party leaders seeking an assurance that if they win the General Election they will introduce measures to remedy the situation.

At the time of writing we have received no response to our letter (see alongside) from Mr. Kinnock, Leader of the Labour Party while Mr. Ashdown, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, replied immediately saying that Mr. Robert MacLennan, who is responsible for these matters, would be replying. So far, no reply has been received.

The Prime Minister, Mr. John Major, has replied, 27.1.92, and we publish some of what he said:

"We are very much aware of the concern about the possible link between pornography and sexual crime. Although research into the effects of pornography has been unable to prove this link conclusively, we believe that pornography degrades all who come into contact with it and its insidious and dehumanising effect on attitudes to women and family relationships cannot be in doubt.

"As you know we have consistently supported reform of the law in this area and, in particular, the strengthening of the Obscene Publications Act 1959."

CONGRATULATIONS BBC WORLD

We feel sure everyone remembers the gratitude of other hostages, to the BBC World Service, "courage and comfort".

In the light of this, and of the wide recognition of throughout the years, National VALA is to pre-World Service and John Tusa, its Managing Director, "delighted and honoured", as has also Mr Ma Board of Governors of the BBC, who will attend Lord Rees-Mogg, Chairman of the Broadcasting Commission, on the great honour of accepting our invitation to make

THE BLUE LOUNGE, ST PAULS
ROBERT ADAM STREET,
between 12 noon and 1.30pm
on TUESDAY 19th MARCH

Your presence would add much to this important and we look forward to seeing you there.

There will then be a break for a bite and a chat brought. Tea and coffee only will be available.

The Annual General Meeting will be from 2.00pm

Directions and Travel

Robert Adam Street is off Baker Street and St Pauls Underground stations are Baker Street, routes along Baker Street are 2B, 82, 113, 159 and 175. There is a National Car Park – Portman Square – tariffs are: Up to 2 hours £2.80 and up to 4 hours £4.80. Meters in the vicinity.

PLEASE NOTE

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION HAS BEEN POSTPONED TO AUTUMN BECAUSE OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

PARTY LEADERS

Letter from Mrs. Whitehouse

I am writing to ask whether, in the light of the recent General Election, you will clarify your attitude to the present Obscene Publications Act.

I feel sure you are aware of the growing public concern about the excesses of obscenity in many of our bookshops. I would draw your attention to a decision not to take action against the publishers on the grounds "that there is insufficient evidence to justify the prospect of conviction, as required by the Code of Practice."

Amongst other perversions and continuous offences of endless sexual torture, the splitting open of live fetuses, disembowelling of pregnant women, babies kept in pain, and the advocacy of violence of the most perverted kind.

Concern about the availability of this material which has been shown time and again, between the wars, escalating incidence of sex crime, demands the introduction of legislation which will effectively control it. I

Yours sincerely,

Mary Whitehouse
President

LATIONS TO LD SERVICE

atitude expressed by Terry Waite, and the service. It did, they said, give them great

tion of the high quality of its programmes to present its Annual Award to the BBCaging Director, has expressed himself as Mr Marmaduke Hussey, Chairman of the attend the presentation.

asting Standards Council, has done us the make the presentation which will be held in

ST PAUL'S CHURCH

REET, LONDON W1

n and 12.45pm

9th MAY 1992.

portant event in National VALA's calendar,

chat until 2.00pm. Packed lunches may be ple.

.00pm until 3.30pm.

and St Paul's Church is signposted. The street, Bond Street and Marble Arch. Bus 59 and 274.

Square Garage - in Gloucester Place. The to 4 hours £5.60. There are also Parking

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AL ELECTION.

ERS QUIZZED

house 13th January 1992

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ous obscenity, this book contains en of living children, the abies being cut to shreds and continual orted kind.

aterial to young people and the link, between pornography and the ands that Parliament now introduces ol it. I look forward to your reply.

wsl

EURO-PORN ON BRITISH TV

Trailers for Britain's first soft pornography TV channel went on the air in January. The Adult Channel is to serve up by satellite a schedule of soft-porn movies, female wrestling and topless game shows.

Early film appearance of Joanna Lumley, Koo Stark and Dennis Waterman in risqué roles will compete with French and American imports as well as the Electric Blue series.

"The channel will show sexy, sensuous, erotic fun" said station chief executive Chris Yates. "We will show 18 certificate films, but this will abide by Independent Television Commission rules. I have no plans to be jailed for showing obscene material. We will be on air for four hours every night after the close of BSkyB's Comedy Channel and hope to entertain and titillate". Viewers with Sky film decoders will simply have to send off for the subscription card.

Mr. Yates claims under-aged applicants will be weeded out. The full schedule of The Adult Channel was launched on 31st January. Subscriptions will cost £50 a year or £15.95 a quarter and it is hoped

to attract up to 500,000 viewers.

However, viewers of the Astra satellite system can already watch soft porn on German stations for free. More explicit material is also available on the Filmnet channel, usually after midnight on Saturday, with the aid of pirated decoders. Mary Whitehouse, who fears that children could use the channel to watch 18 certificate films, said: "We have made approaches to Members of the European Parliament about the channel, but standards are much laxer in much of Europe than here. It is not going to be easy to convince people of our concerns."

The President of The National Viewers' and Listeners' Association added "We cannot do all this ourselves so other concerned parents should also speak out and write to their MEP."

The Adult Channel will soon face the rival After 12 station.

BIG INCREASE IN BAD LANGUAGE!

The use of the F-word on television has increased sixfold in 1991 according to Mrs. Mary Whitehouse. The National Viewers' and Listeners' Association counted every instance of bad language in films after 9pm on BBC, ITV and Channel 4 in the first nine months of the year.

The results of the monitoring by members of NVALA have been sent to Mr. Major, the Home Office, the heads of all channels and regulatory authorities.

Although the survey found that the use of bad language had more than doubled from January to September, the use of the F-word had increased more than sixfold. It was noted 450 times in films after 9pm alone.

It featured 15 times a month at the beginning of the year, but shot up to more than 101 times a month in the second and third quarters. 'Ghosts of the Civil Dead' shown on Channel 4 in July, accounted for 73 mentions.

Mrs. Whitehouse said that 2,340 swearwords and blasphemous expressions were used in the first nine months, an annual rate of 3,120.

The report says that although the F-word's rise was most notable, others have also increased. It says: "The S-word was transmitted at a rate of an

average 59 a month in the first quarter of this year, 70 per month in the second quarter and 100 per month in the third quarter. Blasphemous language has increased from an average of 19 per month in the first quarter of 1991 to an average of 46 per month in the second and third quarters.

In October Lord Rees-Mogg, chairman of the Broadcasting Standards Council, said the F-word was "rapidly losing its power to shock". He said it was now used "by professors in casual conversation" and may soon be no more offensive on television than the word "bloody" is today.

Mrs. Whitehouse was not impressed. She said: "He really should be more circumspect. He is virtually saying we're all getting used to it and that looks like he's condoning it, which is not what the Broadcasting Standards Council is supposed to be doing."

Jane Thynne
The Daily Telegraph (11.11.91)

SEX AND POLITICS - THE THATCHER YEARS

Anyone concerned about moral values and involved in campaigns addressed to these issues will find their interests - even their names - reflected in the pages of 'Sex and Politics' by Martin Durham (Macmillan, £10.99). Subtitled "The Family and Morality in the Thatcher Years", it looks, with considerable perception, at the widespread belief that Thatcherism was synonymous, not only with the taming of the unions and the development of an "enterprise culture", but with issues of morality and of family.

Certainly those of us who cared about these things quickly became and have remained aware of how the Labour Party, in spite of its roots in Christian values, has become increasingly identified with permissiveness. It is interesting to note that, even as I was reading Martin Durham's book, only one Labour peer, Lord Tony Pandy, spoke out against the BBC's initial decision (now revoked) to show 'The Last Temptation of Christ' last December. It is a film that has Jesus claiming he was "a liar and a hypocrite" and depicts him making love to his 'wife' Mary Magdalene.

'Sex and Politics' deals with the battle around the legislation of abortion, with Victoria Gillick's campaign against contraception for

the under-16s, and National VALA's continuing campaign over the quality of broadcasting. It looks also at the development of the women's movement and the effect that its aim - "to deliver women from the bondage of the kitchen and children" - has had upon the family.

Mr. Durham considers the implications behind the claim that moral campaigners in Britain can be equated with the Moral Majority in America, and, mercifully, comes to the conclusion that such a parallel is far too simplistic. However, it is true, as I know from my own experience - sitting in the Public Gallery anxiously watching the efforts of

Labour MPs to "talk out" Cyril Townsend's Protection of Children Bill which set out to control child pornography - that the Parliamentary Labour Party today stands almost without exception against any move to make the present Obscene Publications Act more effective.

The book examines the position of Mrs. Thatcher in this ongoing battle against permissiveness. It also highlights the increasing concern about the support given by left-wing education authorities to gay movements and we are reminded how this was counteracted by, among others, Norman Tebbit. Preaching at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, he declared that there was a need to "overcome the poisoned legacy of the Permissive Society. Tolerance of sexual deviation generated demands for deviance itself to be treated as a norm."

Mr. Durham concludes that, while Mrs. Thatcher had personal sympathy with the idea of a return to "Victorian values", she was primarily concerned with economic and political problems. I can only speak for myself. Mrs. Thatcher left me in no doubt of her support for our campaign to uphold moral values in the media and elsewhere. For that I am eternally grateful.

Mary Whitehouse

A YAWNING GULF!

"Melvyn Bragg's controversial 'A Time to Dance' (BBC1) ended on a believably tender note, suggesting that it was his producer or director, rather than the author, who miscalculated the grossness of earlier episodes. Indicating also perhaps that there's a yawning gulf between what you may describe on paper and what can acceptably be shown on screen."

The Daily Telegraph (27.1.92)

BOOKSHELF

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- The Debasement of Language £1.00p
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The Home Secretary £2.00p
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