

~~CENSORED~~

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REPEAL
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

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NO/DAW/DP

29th November, 1977.

The Editor,
"The Times",
New Printing House Square,
Gray's Inn Road,
London, WC1X 8EZ.

Dear Sir,

"CHILD PORNOGRAPHY"

Mrs. Mary Whitehouse, writing in her capacity as Honorary General Secretary of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (November 23rd), is concerned about "child pornography" and the "sexual exploitation of children". This is puzzling because, although I watch a good deal of television, I cannot once recall ever having seen anything which even remotely falls within such a category on either the B.B.C. or I.T.V. channels. Be that as it may, however, she did raise number of points which need answering.

Firstly, her allegation that there is a considerable trade in such material is grossly exaggerated and the recent reports both on television and in the press, claiming to have evidence to support such an allegation, have given a picture of the situation out of all proportion to that which exists in reality. The National Campaign for the Repeal of the Obscene Publications Acts, whilst in no way condoning the use of children in sexually explicit material, firmly believes that Mrs. Whitehouse and her camp followers have deliberately and mischievously stirred up the recent publicity in the media as a "red herring" in order to try to persuade liberal minds away from their hitherto dedicated aims of once and for all ridding this country of censorship, particularly whilst awaiting the findings of the Williams Committee.

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Secondly, and very true to form, she arrogantly dismisses any expert opinion like that of the Director of Public Prosecutions who has advised the Home Secretary that "offences which might not be caught by existing legislation rarely occur". May I therefore refer her to a Court of Appeal judgment (Regina V. Sutton) delivered on April 28th 1977 in a case which concerned a man who had been convicted of indecent assault against three boys aged 11 to 13, under the 1956 Sexual Offences Act, whilst photographing two of them in the nude. He won his appeal but, in his judgment, the Lord Chief Justice (Lord Widgery) said that "the proper course where there was an act which no one in their right mind could call an assault but which took place in an indecent situation, was to prosecute under the Indecency with Children Act 1960, and not under the 1956 Act". For Mrs. Whitehouse's information, this Act is still very much on the Statute Book, although I doubt whether the "expert" opinion of even the Lord Chief Justice would be acceptable to her.

Thirdly, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that the publication of photographs of young female models dressed as children in "girlie" magazines has "inevitably led to the use of real children". If there is, I challenge her to produce it. I, on the other hand, will gladly put her in touch with real expert evidence on this matter in contrast to her own illogical, prejudiced opinion.

Yours sincerely,



David Webb,
Organiser,

National Campaign for the Repeal of the Obscene Publications Acts