

~~CENSORED~~

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NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REPEAL
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

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Bernard Brick, John Sussams.

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E.A.C. Goodman, LL.B.(Sol.), Pamela Manson.

NO/DAW/DP

12th October, 1977.

LETTER SENT TO
ALL 92 MEMBERS OF THE G.L.C.

I am writing to express the NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REPEAL OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS' extreme concern about the action at present being carried out in the name of the Greater London Council by a small minority of its members who can only be described as killjoy, puritan fanatics. Their avowed aim to "clean up London" will not only deprive thousands of Londoners and visitors to London of their chosen entertainment but also, in the process, deny them their basic human right to see, read and hear whatever they choose for themselves.

We understand that the action being undertaken by the police at the request of these Councillors has not even been debated and voted on by the full Council and will not be so until 18th October. It is deplorable that a small caucus of Councillors, all members of a political party which constantly campaigns on a platform of the freedom of the individual and private enterprise, should have set themselves up as guardians of Londoners' morals. and censor supremos. N.C.R.O.P.A. is non party political and attracts support from people of all political persuasions including many Conservative voters who are appalled by what their elected members are perpetrating.

As you no doubt know, the Home Secretary has set up a Government Committee of Inquiry into Censorship and Obscenity under the chairmanship of Professor Williams. It is expected to take at least two years to complete its deliberations. For this reason alone, any pro-censorship campaign by the G.L.C. and the police should have at least awaited the outcome of that inquiry. The following telegram was sent to the Home Secretary on 6th October:-

"THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REPEAL OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS IS
APPALLED BY LAST NIGHT'S MASS POLICE RAIDS ON FOURTEEN LONDON CINEMA CLUBS.

...../continued

SUCH AN UNPRECEDENTED ACT OF AUTHORITARIAN PERSECUTION IN A SUPPOSEDLY FREE SOCIETY WILL FILL ALL LIBERAL MINDS WITH REVULSION. THAT SUCH ACTION SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN WHILST THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO CENSORSHIP AND OBSCENITY IS STILL SITTING IS SCANDALOUS AND A PRESUMPTUOUS PRE-EMPTING OF ITS FINDINGS. WE DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACTS IMMEDIATELY TO SAFEGUARD OUR EVER DIMINISHING LIBERTIES."

The United Kingdom is a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights. The G.L.C. and the police actions I've here described are a contravention of Article 10 of that Convention (and also of Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Article 10 states that:-

P. "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers".

It is, I think, particularly relevant to mention here that, last Saturday, 8th October, 6,250 policemen were on duty in Greater Manchester, at a cost of £250,000, to protect the individual freedom of one man, carrying a placard bearing the words "Defend British free speech from Red terrorism", to march through the streets. Here in London, however, scores of policemen are constantly on duty to deny individual freedom to 7,000,000 Londoners. It is a verifiable fact that we already have the strictest censorship laws of nearly all the other countries of so-called free Western Europe, and also most of the U.S.A., yet the G.L.C. deems it necessary to make them even more draconian - even though its leader, Mr. Horace Cutler, opposes such measures, or at least, that is what he said in a letter to a member of our Committee on 13th September.

Please vote against any proposed action by the G.L.C. to increase censorship and curb the freedom of the individual. We hope, too, that you will do more than that by becoming an active supporter of our campaign. An application form is enclosed which we hope you will feel bound to complete but, in any case, we would like to hear your comments on this extremely important issue.

Yours sincerely,

David Webb,
Organiser,

National Campaign for the Repeal of the Obscene Publications Act

Enclosure.