

39, Clarendon Road,  
London, W5 1AA.

30th. October 1977.

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*Entered.*

David Webb Esq.,  
15, Sloane Court West,  
Chelsea,  
LONDON, SW3 4TD.

Dear Sir,  
Dear Mr. Webb,

While I feel sure NCROPA activities keep you far too busy to keep track of individual supporters, I nevertheless must apologise for the delay in thanking you for your excellent Newsletter of July and now your circular letter of 19th. October. As mentioned in earlier correspondence my business activities in the petrochemical industry keep me fully stretched; the reason why I was unable to join your Committee and also unable to revert more promptly to your news. Please rest assured I remain a staunch supporter of NCROPA as I continue to find legal restrictions on what an individual in a so-called free society may read, or view quite intolerable. I felt particularly outraged at the recent police raids on private cinema clubs in Soho, prompted by the GLC, but carried out from all reports with a Gestapo like viciousness. The new laws soon to come into force bringing, as far as I understand, all films under the obscene publications acts governing published matter, is a further highly regrettable retrograde step towards hypocritical strict Victorian morality and all the misery of that era. Unhappily NCROPA does not seem to have been able to prevent this further inroad on personal liberty.

Obviously you need fighting funds and I attach my PO for £5.00 to assist your highly appreciated activities.

Regarding the 'Government Committee on Obscenity & Film Censorship', I did see the announcement in the Press a few weeks before receiving your letter of 19th.Oct. and attach photocopy of the letter I sent to the Home Office, just in case it may be of value for your records and efforts. I also take every opportunity to badger my M.P. to do what he can in the House to prevent the enactment of further restrictive legislation and get existing laws on the subject repealed. Otherwise there does not seem to be a great deal more for the individual to do against an all powerful bureaucracy.

As you say so rightly, lethargy on the part of many supporters is allowing the relatively few, but dedicated band of purists and the sanctimonious to sway the establishment one way. Occurrences such as the withdrawal of substantial advertising funds from ITA by a major company unless all sexual connotations are removed from TV advertising, also does not help our cause.

Finally, I would like to repeat a point made to you earlier. There can be little argument about today's power of the Trade Unions. I believe there must be a number of Trade Union leaders as concerned as NCROPA with laws restricting the freedom of their members and all ordinary people. From an answer he gave on the BBC radio programme 'Any Questions' some months ago, I had the impression that the Yorkshire Miners leader Arthur Scargill, might favour NCROPA's broad aims. The point I would make is that considering how anxious the Government are to cooperate with the Unions on economic and political policies, they are unlikely to ignore a strong call from Unions for repeal of repressive laws on so-called obscenity issues. Do you see any possibility to get one or more Trade Unionist on the Committee, or at least supporting our cause? My last point, might an approach to the European Council not be worthwhile considering that on many issues European regulations are superceding national ones? This is particularly underlined by the number of people who have taken their human rights issues to the European Council.

Yours sincerely,  
*H.P. Kaufmann*  
H. P. Kaufmann.

39, Clarendon Road,  
London, W5 1AA.

8th. October 1977.

Mr. Jon Davey,  
Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship,  
Dept. 15,  
Home Office,  
Queen Anne's Gate,  
LONDON, SW1H 9AT.

*Acknowledgement  
received on 13/10/77.*

Dear Sir,

**OBSCENITY AND  
FILM CENSORSHIP**  
What do you think?

The Home Secretary has appointed a Committee to look into the laws on obscenity, indecency and violence in publications, displays and entertainments (but not in television or radio) and the arrangements for film censorship in England and Wales. The Committee would welcome readers' views.

Send your comments now to Jon Davey, Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship, Dept 15, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, LONDON, SW1H 9AT.

The above reference announcement in The Times was recently brought to my notice and I trust it is not too late to submit my views.

It is my considered opinion that the laws referred to above should be repealed and censorship discontinued. My reasons for advocating this course of action are as follows.

1). In any truly free, democratic society the individual must have the right to choose and judge for him/herself any matter almost irrespective of its nature. To restrict such selection by law amounts to political interference with the individual's freedom and by inference suggests the very people who elected Parliament are of inferior intelligence and must be legally restrained from exercising their judgement on controversial matter. This is an intolerable proposition.

Simultaneously it is interesting to note that prohibition of such matter is an invariable characteristic of totalitarian regimes, cf. Nazi Germany and Franco's Spain.

2). As many legal experts have pointed out "obscenity and indecency" defy definition. They are subjective concepts which have to be judged by the individual and not made the subject of imposed laws. Even more questionable is the association with 'the power to deprave'. Is it e.g. to be supposed that someone who has tasted blood in war will be turned into a killer by his experience? Why therefore, <sup>should</sup> someone who has read, or viewed explicit sexual acts be turned into a lesser human being, or criminal?

3). Laws on obscenity and indecency cause an unjustifiable constraint to be placed on free expression by authors, writers of plays and films, etc., and this again, contravenes democratic rights in a free society. Furthermore, it subjects 'artistic merit' to a legal interpretation when in fact the police, magistrates and the judiciary are possibly the least qualified to make such a judgement. The large number of 'obscenity' charges dismissed by juries representative of the people prove the point.

4). In Scandinavian and a number of European countries the availability of what is classed here as 'obscene and indecent' publications and films has added to the freedom of the individual by his having access to these among many other controversial including political subjects banned in this country. It is unacceptable that we should have a less free and democratic society than e.g. Germany. Furthermore, the evidence shows that morality in these countries is if anything higher and more responsible than in this country. Children have not been affected, or 'depraved'. Similar evidence was found in the United States by the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. There is no reason to believe that repeal of the obscenity laws and discontinuation of film censorship would cause different results here. At least it should be given a trial for a given period of time, for legal prohibition has not prevented widespread interest developing in so-called 'obscene and indecent' matter.

5). In emotive terms 'Porn merchants' are claimed to have made a fortune out of dealing in 'pornographic filth' and subjected to penalties in some instances incomprehensibly more severe than those imposed for crimes of violence. If such publications and films were permitted to be freely available, the public could no longer be financially exploited and the police freed to concentrate on serious crimes against the person and property.

In this connection it is interesting to note that since the Courts allowed the book 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' it gathers dust on the shelves of bookshops. The same may ultimately be the result if currently banned, or censored matter were to be allowed. The fact remains that so-called 'soft Porn' publications have a circulation estimated at several millions and not all subscribers can be written off as belonging to the 'Dirty Mac' brigade. The Government is therefore acting contrary to the wishes of a very large number of people by maintaining the obscenity and censorship laws.

6). It has been claimed that availability of 'obscene' publications, films, etc., contribute to sexual offences, especially rape. This is not borne out by experiences in those countries where such material is freely available. There is also no reason to believe it would be different here. A person so mentally deranged as to commit such an offence, is likely to do so irrespective of whether or not 'obscene' material is available to act as a catalyst.

7). It has been suggested that so-called 'obscene and indecent' material is mentally degrading, demeans women, is amoral and contravenes religious precepts. The sexual nature of man motivating his thoughts and actions has been described by eminent psychologists. It is fundamentally accepted that man has as part of his make-up certain sexual needs which have nothing to do with procreation, or the holy status ascribed to them by the sanctimonious and religious. It is consequently natural for a subject of such vital concern to man to be described in words and pictures and this is no more mentally degrading than concern with man's physical health. Indeed some so-called 'indecent' material illustrates or describes explicitly what has been depicted more subtly in some of the world's great paintings and literary works. Erotic themes are in themselves neither 'obscene', nor 'indecent'; only their concept in the mind of the individual can make them so. A further reason why the individual should be free to make up his/her own mind on the subject.

The theme of much 'obscene and indecent' material is, I am told, explicit on women's sexual needs and makes clear her rights to satisfy them as a 'liberated' human being equal to man without having to become a breeding animal. In this respect such material promotes women's equality in sharp contrast to bigoted moral and religious views and dogmas which accorded women a subservient role and treated sexual subjects as taboo. This indeed resulted in much ignorance and misery on the subject and is a contributing factor in sexual material still being classed as 'obscene and indecent' today.

8). Unlike crimes of theft, assault, murder, fraud, etc., etc., concern with 'indecent and obscene' material is a purely personal matter affecting nobody else and causing no harm to the individual involved. By what right therefore, should this privacy be made the subject of law and criminal law at that? Today's Press reports are of a large police operation in which 14 private cinema clubs in Soho were raided, films and ~~equipment~~ projectors seized and the names of members taken. It did not even concern the public as the clubs and members were private and did not impose themselves on the public. That this can happen in a free, democratic society is outrageous and frighteningly conjures up pictures of Nazi stormtroopers raiding Berlin Nightclubs between the wars. If those offended by 'indecent' material have the right to be protected from its display, then equally those who wish to avail themselves of it must have an equal right to do so. This can easily be ensured by specifying 'plain fronted' cinemas, book shops, etc., with warning notices to those likely to be offended. If the latter enter with the deliberate aim of bringing a prosecution, they should by law be prevented from doing so. They cannot after all, have it both ways.

9). It is but a short step from including in 'indecent and obscene' matter everything a ruling political party might object to and the thin end of the wedge for the development of a totalitarian regime. Again, Hitler's Germany serves as a reminder, and the Soviet Union today is virtually an example of such a reality.

10). A previous Home Secretary refused to ban a book (The Bombmakers Handbook?) on how to make bombs and explode them to kill or maim a maximum number of people. If such a work is within the limit of the law and acceptable to the morality of the legislators, then so-called 'indecent/obscene' works on love making should hardly cause raised

eyebrows among the hypocritical <sup>Mr</sup> bureaucracy!

10). The majority of people have a well developed feeling for what is good, satisfies and fulfils. Thus it seems likely that if the obscenity laws and film censorship were to be repealed only controversial material felt to have some true merit will ultimately establish itself and the remainder die out - unless it continues to be denied by law which has so far been the greatest spur to its demand.

12). Violence! Life itself, even nature can be violent. Why ban a reality? The desire to strive for peace and harmony in all things comes from within and cannot be imposed from without. I refer here of course to the depiction of violence in books and films. On criminal violence in practice, as muggings, assault, murder, rape, etc., and particularly bombings, I suggest a considerable tightening up of the law with much stiffer penalties, possibly even the reintroduction of the death penalty in certain instances, e.g. bombings, killing of police men and women.

I trust the Committee will feel able to give due consideration to the views expressed here and in their recommendations will advocate a freedom on so-called 'indecent and obscene' topics comparable to that enjoyed in other advanced societies in Europe and Scandinavia.

Thank you at least for the freedom inherent in your invitation of personal views on this controversial subject.

Yours faithfully,



H. P. Kaufmann.