

NO/DAM/DP

17th March, 1981.

Sir Horace Cutler, O.B.E.,
Leader of the Greater London Council,
The County Hall,
London, SE1 7PB.

Dear Sir Horace,

Thank you for your letter of 12th March in reply to mine of 10th March.

- (1) May I ask on what you base your somewhat arrogant assertion that I am in a minority?
- (2) Even if that were true (which I do not accept for one minute), does that infer that you hold the view that minorities have no rights?
- (3) How can you pretend not to be involved when, as I pointed out, you began all the fuss way back in October last year?
- (4) I did not make any "assumptions" about the Arts Committee's motives. They were openly disclosed to the press. In any case, if the "pegging" of the £930,000 annual grant to the National Theatre was not done as a punishment for "The Romans in Britain", what was it done for, when other arts grants like those to the Festival Ballet and London orchestras were increased?
- (5) If you think there is nothing wrong with choosing what not to support, don't you think it would be more honest to change the name from "National" to "Conservative" Theatre?
- (6) The National Theatre's management will certainly find it difficult not to be inhibited by the G.L.C.'s action in the future. Incidentally it is nonsense for you to pretend that you never at any time threatened to withdraw the National Theatre's grant. In the telegram you sent to Sir Peter Hall you said "I have no doubt that the G.L.C. will be reconsidering its position vis a vis the National Theatre at an early date". That was quoted verbatim in the October 17th edition of the "Evening News". What is the meaning of that, if it is not a threat to its grant, especially since you were then quoted as saying "I am not prepared to see rates and taxes spent to support plays which in my view have no artistic merit"? That, Sir Horace, is censorship - something the Tory party purports publicly to deplore.
- (7) Your argument about calling on the National Theatre management to exercise

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artistic freedom under the discipline of the box-office rather than at public expense is really quite extraordinary since "The Romans in Britain", the one play you believe should never have been put on, has been playing to capacity houses. The logical thing would thus be to increase the number of its performances substantially and indefinitely. I can certainly discern that distinction admirably, thank you!

- (8) Finally, if you are so disgusted with the National Theatre's management, why don't you resign from the Board and make way for someone with a little less hysterical intolerance and a little more artistic and theatrical perception?

Yours sincerely,

David Webb,
Organiser,
National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts