

13-April

EQUITY AGM MOTION 19

Speech of Seconder Pamela Manson

Friends Romans Countrymen and Fellow Members we come to bury Whitehouse - not to praise her. David Webb is not Titus Andronicus. He is not tight as a tic either. Every word of what he says is true. Artistic endeavour and integrity and the very existence of both in the Democratic sense is this country is at risk and this is highlighted by the amendment to David Webb's motion proposed by ~~Madhav Sharma~~ David Gwillin and seconded by Madhav and which I shall now read

- i) explore changes in our contracts and/or the law to protect all our members (including Directors) from any criminal proceedings arising out of their fulfilling their contractual obligation to employers under Equity contracts
- ii) offer full legal support to any member suffering as a result of such proceedings
- iii) monitor in particular, the case of Michael Bogdanov (Director of Romans in Britain) and keep the membership informed of any developments immediately they occur; and
- iv) announce publicly, the full and unequivocal support of our Trade Union for our member Michael Bogdanov.

This country has not woken up the danger of the pro-censorship lobby. On the Fascist Right and the Communist Left in countries where these policies exist there is censorship of writing, performing and publishing materials with which these totalitarian rulers of these regimes do not agree. In both Fascist and communist countries people are penalised harshly to the point of endangering their own lives when they fight for freedom of speech thought and action within these regimes. Vaclav Havel Andre Czernik, ^{in Czech} artistes in Chile and South Africa imprisoned for championing artistic freedom are cases in point. Your Committee Equity's International Committee for Artistes Freedom ~~rights~~ ^{works} to ~~ensure~~ save these people.

In June next, the first step towards risking a member of our Union - a Director of enormous talent, being imprisoned on the excuse and device of "procuring people to perform an indecent act" takes place. The last person who should be prosecuted is Bogdanov. If anybody should be prosecuted it should be the author, the critics or especially Mary Whitehouse herself who gave publicity to the content of the play. Bogdanov only interpreted the contents of the author of the play. The Attorney General could have intervened and not allowed it his case. He did not choose to do so. The fact that a case of this kind is to be allowed in our Courts of the Realm could be the forerunner to banning not only the performing of but the publishing of literary works. If Romans in Britain is ruled that it may not be performed in tact as the author wrote it - then it may not be long before Marlowe's Richard II and Rattigan's play on Lawrence of Arabia may not be allowed performance. One has only to read the magazine Index on Censorship to learn graphically and horrifically ^{how} censorship works in totalitarian states and what happens to creative people who protest against it. What could happen if Whitehouse is allowed full rein is that not only plays but sex education books sold in bland WH Smith's bookshops could be at risk. Maybe "noddy in Toyland" would be looked on as subversive if Whitehouse and her ilk so wished it. Members of the Standing Orders Committee said to me "Could we

not wait until the trial or after it to protest on Bogdanov's behalf. Fellow Members. The answer is NO WE COULD NOT.

I have spent twelve years fighting on behalf of dissidents and Jews in the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries. I know what it means when Secret Police bring charges against Human Rights supporters. When they are taken into custody, and before charges are made against them. Their fellow Human Rights supporters, and activists in the

Western Democracies show solidarity and support for their comrades BEFORE and not AFTER the event. But whether they do or

whether they don't, dissidents after trumped up trials are sentenced to long terms of unjust imprisonment. Think what capital would be made by Tass if Bogdanov is seen to be tried because he directed a play which compared the Roman invasion of Ancient Briton with ~~THE~~ British Imperialist (as they would

name them) Intervention in Northern Ireland. I ask this meeting not in a few months, but now to show Michael Bogdanov SOLIDARITY. And therefore, I ask you

to support David Webb's motion, David Gwillin and Madhav Sharma's amendments, wholeheartedly, unreservedly and as Peter Plover would say, unanimously. I second this motion

end.