

~~GENCENSORED~~

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM  
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

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**FIGHTING SEXUAL CENSORSHIP**

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NO/DAW/DP

25th January 1993

The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, CH, MP,  
Secretary of State for National Heritage,  
Department of National Heritage,  
Horse Guards Road,  
London, SW1P 3AL.

RECORDED DELIVERY

*John Secretary of State,*

Many members of the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA) have been expressing their concern that you, as the Government Minister now responsible for broadcasting, are considering possible ways and means of pro-scribing cross-border TV satellite broadcasts from other member states of the European Community, and in particular what you can do to stop the transmission (from Denmark at present) of "Red Hot Dutch" by Continental Television plc.

Although I understand that no action has yet been decided (or found possible), may I, on behalf of the many members of the NCROPA (the only UK organisation which independently represents the consumer - or potential consumer - of sexually-explicit material) make the strongest possible objection to your taking such action.

Firstly, it would be quite out-of-line with the UK's membership of the EC and its agreement to all the EC's various concomitant treaties, procedures and directives, and by which the UK is now bound.

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Secondly, irrespective of the question of EC trans-frontier broadcasts, it is high time the British Government faced up to the fact that it is us, the British, who are out-of-step regarding the censorship of sexually-explicit publications, not only with virtually all other EC member states, but also most other 'free-world' countries, who have all realistically, sensibly and, above all, justly rid themselves of state 'nannyist' authoritarian sexual censorship, and freed their citizens to choose for themselves what they see, read and hear.

Sexually-explicit material (or "pornography", as it is so often indiscriminately albeit inaccurately described) does not (and has never been proved to) harm anyone. All the major, credible and reliable world investigations into the effects of the free availability of such material, whether on the printed page or beamed in by TV satellite, have concluded that it is certainly basically harmless, and often positively helpful, including the Government's own two major investigations - the Williams Committee (Report of the Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship 1979) and the Cumberbatch/Howitt Report ("Pornography: Impacts and Influences" Home Office Research and Planning Unit 1990).

The vociferous, neo-hysterical, emotive outcries against such harmless material are depressingly familiar and of course originate from the same old predictable sources. Successive Governments have 'run scared' from doing what most MPs know in their hearts, as a matter of principle, is correct on this issue, and have paid heed to these unrepresentative bigots (and often hypocrites too) for far too long, when they know they should really have been enacting legislation which gives the citizens of the UK that true right to 'freedom of expression' enshrined in both the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 19) and the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 10) - the same true right that is enjoyed by nearly all other EC citizens. (Before you cite Ireland as an EC country which shares the UK Government's attitude to "pornography",

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may I remind you that Ireland is a tiny country of a mere 3½ million people, i.e. about 1% of the total EC population. It is important to get this in its proper perspective).

Finally, may I make this point. You are a member of the Conservative Party and of a Conservative Government Administration. The whole philosophy of the Conservative Party, as I understand it, is 'freedom of the individual', 'freedom of choice' and 'freedom of the market-place'. On behalf of the NCROPA, may I very respectfully urge you to honour that splendid philosophy in deed as in word, and thus:-

(1) enact legislation immediately to decriminalise sexually-explicit publications (including TV) for consenting adults,

and (2) honour the UK's commitments to a truly united 'free' Europe, its 'free' market and, most importantly, 'free' expression.

Yours sincerely,



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

P.S. For your information I enclose herewith a copy of the NCROPA's promotional leaflet which sets out our aims and aspirations. *dw.*

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