

~~CENSORED~~

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

FIGHTING SEXUAL CENSORSHIP

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NO/DAW/DP

9th January 1996

Miss B. Pelling,
21 Linden Grove,
Gosport,
Hants.,
PO12 2ED.

Dear Miss Pelling,

Thank you for your letter of 1st January and for telling me about your attempts to stop Mr. Bradfield (the proprietor of the retailing business Dash and Cox, Newsagents, of Stoke Road, Gosport) from selling what you refer to as "pornographic magazines and literature".

I am not surprised that Mr. Bradfield has ignored your "eight letters" when you have behaved so impertinently and improperly, possibly even illegally. The choice of publications which Mr. Bradfield, or any other retailer, is legally entitled to sell is entirely a matter for him (or her), provided the publications do not infringe the provisions of the Obscene Publications Acts or the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, and I am sure Mr. Bradfield's do not.

Mr. Bradfield's magazines and literature merchandise may be disapproved of by yourself, and you may even find it offensive, but that in no way entitles you to demand that it be banned for those who do not think as you do, and thus wish to be able freely to purchase such material.

As it is, the U.K. has virtually the most repressive, draconian censorship laws of any country in the so-called 'free-world' - certainly in the European Union and the U.S.A., and which in our view undoubtedly breach the 'freedom-of-expression' provisions of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (Article 19) and the European Convention on Human Rights 1950 (Article 10), to both of which great charters of liberty the UK is an originating signatory and by which she is thus supposed to be bound. This is a scandalous situation in itself, but that/intolerant, narrow-minded, bigoted minority of puritannical busy-bodies, self-appointed guardians of the nation's morals, like yourself, should be able to get away with exercising such a totally unrepresentative influence on our legislators, is a positive outrage.

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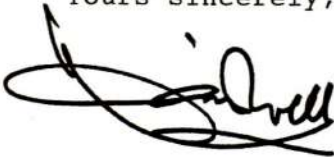
There is absolutely no proven evidence that the exposure to sexually-orientated, or even fully sexually explicit material (what you would call "pornography") is harmful - even to children, should they accidentally or intentionally come into contact with it. The idea that it is so is a myth in which those like yourself quite unjustifiably believe and thus perpetuate.

You also seem to resent Mr. Bradfield and his fellow retailers making a profit from selling such material. What is wrong with making a profit from your business? Indeed, that is surely its whole purpose. More power - and profit - to his elbow, say I.

You asked me to contact Mr. Bradfield and his shop and I am, of course, delighted to comply with your request by sending him a copy of your letter to me and of this one in reply.

Finally, in response to your request for advice as to where you "go from here", I am too polite to write what immediately comes to mind, but, as a starter, might I suggest a visit to your local library for a copy of John Stuart Mill's "On Liberty"?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Webb', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

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