



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

29th January 1998

The Editor,  
"Evening Standard",  
PO Box 2309,  
London, W8 5EE.

Dear Sir,

Liz Forgan is right to highlight ("Evening Standard 28th Jan.) the depressingly escalating "authoritarian tendency" in 'New Labour' and its band of "new moralisers", headed by Home Secretary Jack Straw, and which is creating such alarm amongst all those of us who champion and cherish fundamental 'freedom-of-expression'.

In a country which is already saturated with the most draconian State sexual censorship of virtually all other 'free-world' countries (certainly European Union Member countries), the chilling contemplation of even more stringent curbs promised by Mr. Straw is a matter for grave concern.

Mr. Straw's hugely misplaced pontifications on film and video content follow hard on Culture Secretary Chris Smith's recent pronouncement that he is to issue a proscription order against Eurotica Rendezvous, an encrypted television satellite service legally transmitted by a EU fellow Member State - notwithstanding that the European Court has already ruled (on 10th Sept. 1996) that it is contrary to the Europ-

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ean Directive on Transfrontier Broadcasting (89/559/EEC) for the UK to do so.

Mr. Smith's announcement, in its turn, was preceded a short time before by one from the Education Secretary that Moslem schools were to be given State aid, when a celebrated British author is still having to be given round-the-clock police protection against a Moslem edict that he must be killed because he wrote something that did not meet with their approval.

That a Labour Government should be pursuing so alarmingly puritannical a trend, when so many of us had such great expectations from them for the long-overdue easing of the UK's grotesquely out-moded censorship laws, which would bring us that same freedom of choice now enjoyed by virtually all other 'free-world' societies, is as devastating as it is disgraceful. What price now the 'Old Labour' promoted (by former Labour Home Secretary Merlyn Rees in 1977) distinguished Williams Committee's Report, so cavalierly dismissed by successive ensuing Tory Governments, but whose unanimous findings and recommendations called for the virtual scrapping of statutory censorship legislation for consenting adults? - 'No sex, please, we're New Labour'?

Yours sincerely,



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