

~~GENCENSORED~~

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REPEAL OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

ORGANISER — David Webb, 15 Sloane Court West, Chelsea, London SW3 4TD — Tel: 01-730 9537
COMMITTEE — Lord Norwich, Clement Freud, M.P., Dr. Brian Richards, Clifford Hanley, Eric Miller, William J. Wright,
Bernard Brick, John Sussams, Dr. Christine Pickard, E.A.C. Goodman,
LL.B.(Sol.), G.T. Fowler, M.P.

NEWSLETTER

No. 1

July, 1977

Dear Supporter,

This is the first of our newsletters intended to keep you informed of the main activities of N.C.R.O.P.A. as well as providing our analysis of problems still to be overcome.

We apologise for the long delay before its appearance, but on so many occasions its assembly has had to be interrupted by other urgent matters which required immediate action. With all the members of the Committee having their own individual work commitments, time is of the essence and unavoidably limited. If there are apparent silences from time to time, please be assured that this almost certainly means that our activities are increasing, rather than the opposite, and that your Committee are a dedicated team who have no intention whatsoever of releasing the pressure until our aims are achieved.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID WEBB, Organiser

CARTE BLANCHE

Supporters of N.C.R.O.P.A. were present outside the Phoenix Theatre, London, last Autumn to publicise the Campaign and distribute leaflets to the first-night audience of the erotic revue "Carte Blanche". Our presence received television coverage on BBC National News and in several national newspapers.

SEX LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

The proposal by Jens Thorsen, a Danish national, to make a film on the sex life of Jesus Christ was the cause of an unprecedented furore by the pro-censorship lobby. Committee members wrote letters on behalf of our Campaign, pleading for commonsense and tolerance, to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, leading clergy including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hume and the Moderator of the Free Church Council. A letter was also sent to H.M. The Queen regretting the fact that she allowed herself to become personally involved, albeit, we felt sure, because, as Lord Goodman put it, she was "ill-advised". In addition, on 10th February, a telegram was sent to the Home Secretary regretting his authoritarian action in refusing Mr. Thorsen entry to this country and a letter explaining our viewpoint was also sent to the Danish Ambassador.

(N.B. In the same way that N.C.R.O.P.A. is non-party political, it is also non-sectarian. However, we are certainly not anti-Christian and do, indeed,

have many active Christians supporting us. It is an important fact, however, and has to be said, that most of the organised resistance to our proposals stems from church groups.)

"PORNOGRAPHY IS DECADENCE EXPLOITED"

Some indication of the growing awareness of N.C.R.O.P.A.'s position as the opposition platform to the rantings and intolerance of the pro-censorship lobby was clearly demonstrated on October 18th last year when David Webb, National Organiser, was a guest speaker, with publisher John Calder (a founder-member of the Defence of Literature & the Arts society), opposing the motion that "Pornography is Decadence Exploited" at the Cambridge Union Debating Society. Although the motion, supported by Mrs. Mary Whitehouse and Mr. John Groser (of "The Times"), was carried, it should be remembered that this debate took place at the time of the extraordinary over-reaction by many religious groups to Jens Thorsen and his proposed film and, in fact, he had originally been asked to participate himself. It was only after Mrs. Whitehouse issued an ultimatum that she would refuse to take part if he did, presumably because she considered her arguments would not stand up to his, that his invitation was withdrawn by the Union. Furthermore, the enormous national publicity this received in the media had motivated the Christian Union of the University, described by the Bishop of Norwich as "the most active society in Cambridge", to mobilise its forces and turn up in strength. David Webb spoke to many undergraduates afterwards and they all agreed that, had the debate been on a simple pro or anti censorship motion, the result would have been overwhelmingly different.

GENESIS P. ORRIDGE

One member of the Committee, Eric Miller, took part in a television programme on the controversial Genesis P. Orridge Exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. A letter from Mr. Miller deploring the censorship of the artist's work subsequently appeared in the London "Evening Standard". Indeed, Mr. Miller is a prolific newspaper correspondent and has had many letters published in support of our cause in both the local and national press.

SEX IN OUR TIME

The Committee also clashed with Independent Television over its suppression of the documentary series "Sex in our Time" which, although it had already been screened on Australian TV without incident, has been shelved on the grounds that it is too controversial for British viewers. A healthy exchange of letters passed between N.C.R.O.P.A. and Lady Plowden, Chairman of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, as well as Mr. George Cooper, Managing Director of Thames Television which produced the series.

N.C.R.O.P.A. LEAFLETS

The managements of a number of film clubs in central London have been kind enough to display our posters and application forms on their premises. One of these clubs was recently raided by the police and our forms were seized along with the films and projection equipment. On the recommendation of our legal advisers, the Organiser wrote to the law officers concerned, including Sir Robert Mark, the former Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, as a result of which our leaflets were returned.

PRESS CAMPAIGN

Although the Committee have made great attempts to explain our views on censorship in the national press on every possible occasion, we have

come up against what, at times, would appear to be positive obstruction. Whilst the press is always ready to publish Mrs. Whitehouse's opinions at the drop of a hat, they seem positively indifferent to the opposing point of view. We are doing all we can to remedy this bias, whether intended or not, and we trust that, in future, we shall be afforded more appropriate coverage. (Incidentally, Mrs. Whitehouse recently complained that during thirteen years of campaigning, she had only been allowed something in the region of 2 hours television time to put over her views. After contacting all the commercial television companies throughout the country, the Organiser discovered that at current television advertising rates, this represented £3,707,520 worth of free publicity! He wrote a letter to "The Times" about it but, as usual, the Editor declined to publish it. This did not come as any surprise to Mr. Webb who has lost count of the number of letters he has written to "The Times" since inaugurating the Campaign, none of which has been selected for publication. The Editor of "The Times", William Rees-Mogg, an active Roman Catholic, whilst giving almost limitless scope for the pro-censorship camp to disseminate its bigoted propaganda, is obviously determined to prevent the challenging arguments of people like ourselves from even being aired. Similar criticism of his editorial bias has been expressed for a long time by the Defence of Literature & the Arts Society.

PROVINCIAL PRESS CAMPAIGN

In January we launched a provincial press campaign and letters were sent to 70 provincial daily and evening newspapers. Many of these were published and this resulted in the recruitment of more supporters although the Organiser, as expected, did receive one or two abusive replies which were, needless to say, anonymous. One of these replies, written in block capitals, wanted to know if David Webb "was the David Webb born with congenital syphilis twenty-one years ago" and if that was so, had he organised the N.C.R.O.P.A. as his way of wreaking his revenge on the society that raised him! If that letter was designed to change Mr. Webb's mind and keep him awake at night, we have to report that it failed miserably!

SUPPORT FROM PUBLISHERS

A number of publishers have kindly donated free space to N.C.R.O.P.A. in their magazines so that we can publicise what we are trying to bring about and, hopefully, recruit more members thereby. Kelerfern Publishing ("Whitehouse", "Playbirds" etc.), "Forum", the highly respected journal of human relations, and more recently Tabor Publications ("Experience", "Silk" etc.) have all provided such facilities and in the latest edition of "Silk", Beryl Grant has reported an in-depth interview with David Webb and his hopes and aspirations for N.C.R.O.P.A. Mr. Webb was also interviewed by Dr. M. Tracey of the University of Leicester Centre for Mass Communication in connection with research he is carrying out and for future publication. Mr. Paul Raymond of the Paul Raymond Organisation has also promised assistance through his two publications "Men Only" and "Club International" and the editors of "Link-Up" magazine have offered free space to us in a future edition.

LEGAL CASES

Unfortunately, N.C.R.O.P.A. does not, at present, have sufficient resources to provide financial help to people involved in prosecutions under the Obscene Publications Acts but we have been approached for help and advice on a number of occasions and have met such requests insofar as we are able. Dr. Arabella Melville and Colin Johnson, the publishers of "Libertine", contacted us when their trial came up at Leicester Crown Court (and we are delighted that they were completely acquitted), the solicitors of a defendant in a trial at Liverpool Crown Court sought assistance and

advice and very recently we were approached for witnesses to give expert evidence in a trial at Ipswich Crown Court, which we were able to arrange. We are extremely fortunate in having two well-known doctors on our Committee who specialise in psycho-sexual medicine and whose expertise is widely respected and often asked for in evidence by leading Counsel. We must make it clear, however, that the prime function of N.C.R.O.P.A. is not to act as a legal aid group for victims of the Obscene Publications Acts, much as we would like to, but to militate in a really positive way for the removal of these iniquitous Acts which permit such prosecutions to be brought in the first place.

GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO OBSCENITY, INDECENCY & CENSORSHIP

Provided that the constituent members of this Committee of Inquiry are truly representative of the majority of the people of this country (at the time of going to press their names have not yet been announced by the Home Secretary), N.C.R.O.P.A. does not oppose it, although its support can only be somewhat limited in view of the fact that there have already been a number of major investigations which have quite adequately probed all aspects of the subject and the setting up of yet another is a totally unnecessary, wasteful repetition. The findings in the three major investigations so far carried out (the Danish Forensic Medicine Council's Report to the Danish Penal Code Council 1966; the Arts Council of Great Britain's Report on the Workings of the Obscene Publications Acts 1968; the United States Presidential Commission on Pornography and Obscenity 1970) have been unanimous, which are that so-called pornography or obscenity is harmless and that legal restrictions on it should be lifted for consenting adults. We have, of course, expressed our wish to be allowed to submit our own case to this Committee and expect to be invited to do so once it is in session.

LETTERS TO ALL 635 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Individual letters were sent, on 18th April, to every Member of Parliament in the House of Commons, setting out the aims of our Campaign, our proposals for reforming the law and our views on the forthcoming Committee of Inquiry. A copy of that letter is enclosed herewith for your information. ALL SUPPORTERS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO WRITE TO THEIR OWN M.P.s WITHOUT DELAY AND AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE HENCEFORTH WHENEVER AN ISSUE CONCERNING CENSORSHIP EMERGES. A considerable number of M.P.s are naive enough to believe that, because they receive, let us say, 50 letters in favour of censorship and only two against, this represents a true reflection of the views of the majority of their constituents. You and I know, of course, that this means nothing of the sort and that those who wish to ban something or other always scream loudest and longest. The ordinary man or woman in the street is, regrettably, not given to putting pen to paper very often and thus the voice of the silent majority does not make itself properly heard. Every one of us MUST do everything possible to ensure that our voice is heard and acted upon. WRITE TO YOUR OWN M.P. NOW - AND THEN WRITE TO MERLYN REES, THE HOME SECRETARY, IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS.

OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

An enormous amount of correspondence has passed between the Organiser and several very active Committee members on a whole host of matters of related interest to N.C.R.O.P.A., ranging from requests for factual information regarding our censorship laws from College students wishing to prepare a lecture on the subject to fanatical replies to letters we've had published in the press from indignant Bristol ladies who would

like to pack us all of to the U.S.A.! (Maybe that's not such a bad idea - there Americans are certainly largely free from the sickening double-talk about freedom of the individual that is spewed out so regularly and so sanctimoniously by many prominent people in this country.) Amongst many others, letters have been written to the Duke of Edinburgh, criticising some parts of an article he wrote for the "SUNDAY MIRROR" on 6th February which was factually inaccurate, to the Editor of "THE SUN" protesting about his leader column in the 15th December 1976 edition headed "Kick Out the Porn Merchants", based on a highly subjective story of doubtful accuracy by one of his reporters, and sited exactly opposite the "Page 3 Nude"; to the Editor of the "DAILY MIRROR" about their irresponsible coverage of I.T.V.'s screening of "X" certificated films and in particular its headline "TV PORN SHOCKER" (22nd June); numerous letters to the Home Secretary, both the present and former, to protest amongst other things at M.P. Michael Alison's deputation (23rd June) which expressed "concern" over the appointment of Professor Bernard Williams as Chairman of the Committee of Inquiry because he is a Humanist, to protest at the expected length of this Inquiry (two or three years) and to protest at the recent upsurge of police activity throughout the country in the area of so-called obscene publications and the implementation of what looks remarkably like a national "witch-hunt". We also wrote to Denis Lemon, the Editor of "GAY NEWS" expressing our concern about the criminal libel case Mary Whitehouse instituted against him and which, at the time of writing, is being heard at the Old Bailey. Still many more letters have been written to newspapers, many of them published but, as already stated, never in "The Times" in spite of the enormous column-space constantly afforded the pro-censorship lobby, and, of course, lots more in answer to correspondence from supporters.

N.C.R.O.P.A. POSTERS & LEAFLETS

As well as the printed application for membership forms, we now have available a large quantity of posters, size 15" x 20" with the following wording:-

N.C.R.O.P.A.

A B O L I S H

C E N S O R S H I P

N O W !

- * Do you believe in freedom?
- * Do you detest censorship?
- * Do you believe that adults should have the right to see, read and hear whatever they choose for themselves?

If so, support the

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REPEAL
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

Details from the National Organiser,
15, Sloane Court West, Chelsea,
London SW3 4TD. Tel. 01-730 9537.

If you would like a supply of these to distribute to suitable sites (e.g. owners and managers of bookshops, newspaper shops, cinema clubs and societies, theatres and theatre clubs, student unions, political clubs, social and working men's clubs, women's institutes, etc. - in fact to anyone who is willing to display a copy on his or her premises and to which the public has access) or in the windows of your own homes, please let us know. The leaflets will very soon need to be reprinted but these too will be sent on application.

N.C.R.O.P.A. METAL LAPEL BADGES AND SELF-ADHESIVE STICKERS

We hope, soon, to have a supply of N.C.R.O.P.A. metal, lapel badges, as well as sheets of self-adhesive stickers. The production costs for promotional aids like these (later on, perhaps, we shall be able to have some printed T-shirts also) are large and we shall, of course, have to offer these for sale. We feel, however, that they will be very popular with supporters, especially the younger ones, and any profits would, of course, go to the Campaign funds.

MEMBERSHIP

We still need a great many more supporting members to give us more "weight" and consequently to provide more funds which are currently very low. If every supporter would undertake to recruit at least two more members this would help us enormously, so please do your utmost to do so. Whilst we appreciate that you, the recipient of this newsletter, will already have donated to the Campaign funds, anything further you can spare will be most gratefully received.

FUTURE PUBLIC MEETINGS

We hope to arrange a full supporters' meeting in the foreseeable future and you will be notified of this at a later date. In the meantime, please do everything possible to publicise the Campaign. Any ideas and suggestions you may have will be most welcome.

Remember that, at all times, our opponents are militant and that to combat this we must be militant too! REMEMBER, TOO, THAT THE ULTIMATE OBSCENITY IS CENSORSHIP! "Le mauvais métier que celui de censeur" - Guy Patin (A bad calling, that of censor).