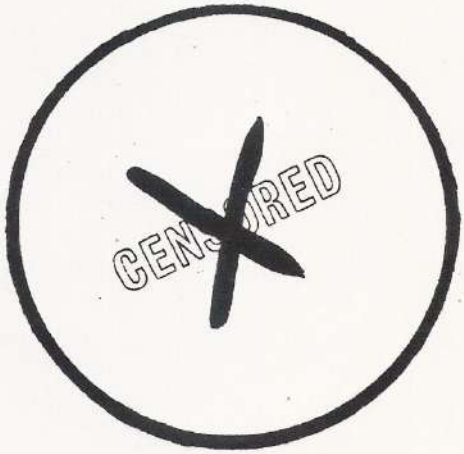
NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

NCROPA

OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS (PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, ETC.)(AMENDMENT) BILL

A CRITIQUE

FEBRUARY 1986



WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF DAVID WEBB, DIRECTOR, N.C.R.O.P.A.
15, SLOANE COURT WEST, CHELSEA, LONDON, SW3 4TD
TEL: 01-730 9537

Obscene Publications (Protection of Children, Etc.)(Amendment) Bill

A CRITIQUE

Representations from the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA)

FOREWORD

The National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA) was formed in 1976 to fight censorship and to campaign for the comprehensive reform of those laws unnecessarily restricting consenting adults from choosing for themselves what they see, read and hear. The NCROPA regards such choice as an inalienable human right and essential to upholding freedom of expression.

During the past ten years, instead of any move towards our goal, and any improvement in the already existing intolerable situation of 1976, censorship in this country has increased alarmingly, whereas in most other countries of the 'free' Western World, the reverse has occurred and censorship restrictions have been systemically reduced and often removed completely.

Here in the U.K., however, more and more repressive laws have been passed, their real purpose often cleverly camouflaged by dishonest titles and even more dishonest and hysterical pro-censorship propaganda from the self-appointed 'guardians of the nation's morals'. (e.g. The 1984 Video Recordings Acts should truthfully be called the 1984 Video Censorship Act.)

The 'Obscene Publications (Protection of Children, etc.)(Amendment) Bill' would, if passed into law, be just such another of these unacceptably repressive statutes and thus in total conflict with the kind of reform of our present obscene publications legislation that the NCROPA envisages and seeks. For this reason the NCROPA completely rejects this private member's Bill, introduced by Mr. Winston Churchill, M.P. for Davyhulme on 4th December 1985, and does not wish to see its passage into law. It very much hopes, therefore, that Parliament

will share its view and will likewise reject it completely.

Our more specific reasons for so rejecting the Bill follow, as well as our detailed consideration of the provisions of the Bill, clause by clause. We submit these latter considerations without prejudice to our overall condemnation of the Bill, of course. We hope that the Bill does not reach the Statute Book but, if it does, we hope that Parliament will have incorporated some of our suggestions and made appropriate concessions accordingly.

OUR OBJECTIONS TO THE BILL

In the Home Office Report of the Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship (Cmnd 7772), under the Chairmanship of Professor Bernard Williams, which was presented to Parliament in November 1979, the law relating to obscenity in this country was described as in "chaos" and "a mess" (paragraph 2.29, page 19). It consequently warned against further 'piecemeal' legislation and proposed that "the existing variety of laws in this field should be scrapped and a comprehensive new statute should start afresh". (paragraph 13.4., page 159). The 'Obscene Publications (Protection of Children, etc.)(Amendment) Bill' is just such an example of further 'piecemeal' legislation and therefore contrary to the recommendations of the Williams Report. It will add to the "chaos".

In his press release of 4th December 1985, Winston Churchill described the general aim of his Bill as being "to protect children and young persons under 18 years of age from exposure to obscene or grossly indecent material". In a country already saturated by a plethora of censorship laws, children and young persons are already 'protected'. Many people, including NCROPA supporters, would think already over protected. Some of the statutes which already 'protect' children and young persons - and adults - in one way or another, from exposure to 'obscene' and/or 'grossly indecent' material are as follows:-

Metropolitan Police Act 1839
Town Police Clause Act 1847
Customs Consolidation Act 1876
Cinematograph Act 1909
Judicial Proceedings (Regulation of Reports) Act 1926
Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937
Cinematograph Act 1952

Post Office Act 1953
Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act 1955
Obscene Publications Act 1959
Obscene Publications Act 1964
Theatres Act 1968
Unsolicited Goods and Services Act 1971
Protection of Children Act 1978
Customs and Excise Management Act 1979
Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1973
Indecent Displays (Control) Act 1981
British Telecommunications Act 1981
Broadcasting Act 1981
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
Cinematograph (Amendment) Act 1982
Video Recordings Act 1984
Telecommunications Act 1984
Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984

Further 'protection' is afforded by offences under Common Law which include:-

Blasphemous Libel
Conspiracy to Corrupt Public Morals
Outraging Public Decency
Keeping a Disorderly House
Holding an Indecent Exhibition, etc., etc.

The Bill's method of achieving Mr. Churchill's aim is by bringing television and sound broadcasting under the provisions of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act and by making it illegal to sell "the more explicit forms of sex-magazines in news-agents and other shops to which persons under 18 have access". He claims, quite dishonestly, that he "does not seek to change the present test of obscenity contained in the 1959 Act which refers to material which tends to 'deprave and corrupt'", but then goes on to say in his press release that his Bill "would however introduce an additional and more tightly drawn test of obscenity in respect of material sold in places to which persons under 18 have access or disseminated through the medium of television or sound broadcasting." What ever he may say to the contrary, that <u>is</u> a change in the present test - a test that is in any case, in our opinion, already unacceptably harsh.

Be that as it may, television and sound broadcasting is already more than sufficiently controlled and monitored by the various broadcasting Acts. The BBC Chairman and Governors are appointed by the Government and are therefore accountable to it. If the Government does not approve of the way in which they are carrying out their duties, the remedy is in its own hands. The Government appointed them in the first place so, in any case, it only has itself to blame. Likewise the Independent Broadcasting Authority is similarly appointed and can thus be brought to heel.

In his introduction to the Bill's Second Reading in the House of Commons on 24th January, Winston Churchill said that "there is considerable public concern at the level of violence and the increasing amount of obscene material transmitted into millions of homes." Yet what grounds does he have for that contention? He cites "the volume of comment in the media, as well as the numerous representations received by honourable Members." The "volume of comment in the media" is hardly a reliable yardstick for measuring the level of "public concern" over such an emotive issue or, for that matter, over any other issue, the ruling masters, the motives and the objectives of most of the present-day press in this country being who and what they are. With regard to the "numerous representations received by many honourable Members" on the subject, the NCROPA has never ceased to be amazed at the blanket importance so many M.P.s attach, not to the content, but to the numbers of letters they receive, particularly on matters of this kind. It is a sad but surely inevitable fact that those in our society who wish to restrict and control us, who wish to ban things, are always going to be those who are most militant, who most join campaigns, who most go to meetings and demonstrations, who most write to their M.P.s They may have the biggest mouths, they may have the most industrious pens and this may give them the appearance of being most representative, but the fact is they are not. We believe that the majority of the people of this country are not greatly concerned by "the level of violence and the increasing amount of 'obscene' material transmitted into millions of homes". The majority of the people in this country are sensible, fair-minded and tolerant. They do not want a state 'nanny' to censor what they see and hear. However, these people are not, regrettably, the kind of people who write to their M.P.s Their views and opinions are nevertheless just as important and should be considered. If they were, we feel certain that many M.P.s would adopt a rapid change of approach to these matters and summon up the courage to stand up and proclaim what we know they often privately believe.

With regard to the display and sale of "the more explicit forms of sex-

magazines in newsagents and other shops", the implication is that this is occurring at present. This simply is not so. In that Second Reading debate, Mr. Churchill said that "there is readily available a new brand of highly explicit sex magazines". This "new brand" of sex magazine is something of a mystery. Nobody really seems to know what it is, including Mr. Churchill. When we put it to him personally he either could not or would not explain. We do not accept that there is any such "new brand" of magazine, nor the implication, therefore, that it is being disseminated to children. Having been concerned and involved with this issue for the past ten years, we can claim, not immodestly, to have expert knowledge about what is and is not available, and we categorically reject this claim as being pure invention. In any case, such material, if it did exist, would easily be caught by the existing draconian legislation embodied in the present Obscene Publications Acts. Additional legislation of the kind Mr. Churchill is demanding would be totally unnecessary.

Right from its inception, the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts has applied the same criteria to all questions concerning the nature and availability of sexually and violently explicit material:-

(1) Does it cause harm?

(2) Whether or not it causes harm, should it be freely available if it causes offence to some people?

They are virtually the same criteria that the Williams Committee applied and, with certain minor exceptions, our answers and those of the Williams Committee are the same.

In our written evidence to that Committee in April 1978 we said:-

"Most of us find censorship of any kind repugnant, to say the least. It can only be justified in exceptional circumstances, for example in the interests of national security or where there is indisputable evidence that positive harm will be caused if it is not imposed. With regard to so-called "obscenity" and "obscene" publications (or pornography, if you wish - call it what you will), no such evidence has ever been produced. No-one has ever <u>proved</u> that anyone has been harmed by exposure either to sexually or violently explicit material, either of a "normal" (whatever that means!) or deviant nature. The onus of proof

must lie with the 'prosecution' - that is with those who believe that this is not so. They must prove that this material is 'guilty'. It is not for others who think as we do, to prove that it is 'innocent'. We submit that in this respect they have failed miserably and the only verdict is an 'acquittal'."

That submission and its rationale remains as true today as it did eight years ago. For all the many pieces of so-called 'research' instituted to investigate this material (most of them spurious, to say the least, e.g. the much discredited 'Parliamentary Group Video Enquiry') and which have produced findings to support the claim that it <u>is</u> harmful, just as many, if not more, can be cited which have produced findings to support the claim that it is <u>not</u> harmful, is certainly harmless, and is, in some cases, positively helpful.

With regard to sexually explicit material, we often hear a great deal about the supposed 'trigger' effect it has in arousing sexual desire which then leads on to the pursuance of gratifying that desire at all costs, and by whatever means, often by the use of force on an unwilling sexual partner. Horrible though they are, and in spite of claimed huge increases in their numbers in recent years, rape cases are still, fortunately, <u>comparatively</u> few. Whenever any sexual material is found in the possession of a rapist, it is always claimed, especially by defending lawyers for whom it is a favourite ploy, that this is what provoked the attack. Its possession is, however, much more likely to be an effect of sexual appetite, rather than its cause. Statistics which we believe would be quite a revelation, would be those which gave the number of occasions on which a potential rape, or sexually motivated attack on an unwilling partner, had actually been averted because of the availability of a piece of sexual material (magazine, film, video etc.) which had been used as a 'safety-valve' substitute by providing sexual stimulation as a masturbatory aid and subsequent sexual gratification, albeit vicarious. Such statistics will, alas, never be possible to acquire.

Normally, people will be completely unharmed by exposure to sexual material, even those who are shocked by it or find it offensive. Most will probably be completely indifferent to it but many will find it extremely pleasurable, and even helpful. If it falls into the hands of young people, it won't harm them either, and if children accidentally see it, as Magnus Magnusson said in a Terry Wogan interview show, they won't understand it and so it won't affect them one way or the other.

With regard to exposure to violent material, particularly on television, the same criteria apply - does it cause harm and should it be permitted if some are offended by it? Our submission is that the answer is the same, that is 'case not proven'.

Violence in the media and in entertainment has always been with us. Drama reflects life and life is, regrettably, often violent. The violence in such television programmes as "Starsky and Hutch" or "The Professionals" is essentially no different from the violence many of us were brought up on in regular visits to the cinema for a diet of perpetual 'cowboys and indians' and 'cops and robbers' films. It is fallacious to believe that children are not able to differentiate between fact and fantasy. Neither are children nearly as vulnerable as many adults would have us believe. The 'copy-cat' effect of children watching TV and then imitating in reality what they have seen on the screen has been widely exaggerated and distorted.

The 1983 BBC Committee which investigated violence in all its programmes, concluded that "There is no absolute proof of any instance of aggressive behaviour in society being due to an act of violence seen earlier on the television screen." (The Portrayal of Violence in Television Programmes, published by the BBC Sept 1983) Naturally enough, others have since endeavoured to dispute that finding. However, even Mrs. Mary Whitehouse, President of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, in a BBC Radio 4 programme called "Stripped to the Essentials"*, has at last admitted that there is no way of proving that there is any harm caused by exposure to such material. She now believes that the only test to apply is one of "common-sense" - her own, of course! Her own common-sense tells her that such material must be harmful. In other words, its is 'guilty' until proved 'innocent'. That complete reversal of the time-honoured 'burden of proof' test is as unacceptable as it is outrageous. Our "common-sense" tells us that such material is not harmful.

*BBC Radio 4, 13.2.86, 7.40 p.m.

OUR DETAILED OBSERVATIONS ON THE BILL

I. THE LONG TITLE

The long title, or preamble, to the Bill is inaccurate. (This was pointed out by Ian Mikardo, M.P. for Bow & Poplar, during the Second Reading debate

on 24th January 1986 - Hansard Vol. 90, No. 43, Col 577). The Bill makes amendments to other sections of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act apart from section 1. In the first line, therefore, the words "section 1 of" should be omitted.

II. CLAUSE 1.

Section (1)

This is totally unnecessary. Public service broadcasting is already subject to sufficient legal constraints as laid down by the various broadcassting Acts. The Independent Broadcasting Authority, which controls and regulates independenet television and radio, is subject to the 1981 Broadcasting Act which forbids anything being transmitted which "offends against good taste or decency or is likely to encourage or to incite crime or lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling" (section 4, 1981 Broadcasting Act). This is a stricter test than obscenity. The BBC's licence agreement (under the terms of its Charter) imposes similar requirements (1981 Cmnd 8233). In any case, as Mr. Douglas Hogg, M.P. for Grantham pointed out in the House on 24th January, broadcasting is already subject to the Common Law offence of Obscenity. (Hansard, Vol. 90, No. 43, Col. 578) Cable television is subject to the provisions of the 1984 Cable and Broadcasting Act, section 25 of which makes the showing of obscene material an offence.

If the purpose of the Bill is to substitute the test of 'obscenity' for the existing test of 'indecency', the relevant parts of the BBC Charter, of the 1981 Broadcasting Act and of the 1984 Cable and Broadcasting Act should be amended. Section 1 of the Bill as presently drafted contradicts these provisions without amending them.

Section (2)

This requires the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions to any proceedings for an offence under this section in respect of an article published through the medium of television or sound broadcasting. Such a requirement should also apply to section (2) of this Bill. Section (2) also applies to television broadcasting, as well as to 'obscene' articles (as described) which are "published in a place to which persons under eighteen years of age have access."

Mr. Churchill gave the reason for the inclusion of Clause 1, Section (2) in the Bill as being a means of protecting broadcasters "from vexatious litigation" (House of Commons Debate, 24.1.86 - Hansard Vol 90, No 43, Col 560). Shopkeepers, newsagents etc. should also be so protected. In fact they will be in far greater need of such protection, in their much more humble circumstances than the "moguls of the media" (as Mr. Churchill described them), who will have all the benefits and resources and back-up of vast organisations behind them in the event of any litigation.

III. CLAUSE 2.

This Clause of the Bill imposes an additional test of 'obscenity' on an article in relation to persons under eighteen years of age. In spite of Mr. Churchill's statement that he does not intend to replace the present principle test of obscenity contained in the 1959 Obscene Publications Act - the "tendency to deprave and corrupt" test (Hansard 24.1.86, Vol 90, No 43, Col 563), this is precisely what his Bill does and it replaces it in an alarming, restrictive and repressive way.

The effect of this clause 2, will be that the display or sale of any publication containing any of the depictions described in sub-section (a), even if not on a cover or outer wrapping, will render a bookseller or newsagent liable to conviction. The implications for 'freedom of expression' are horrifying. No measure so restrictive and authoritarian exists anywhere else in the European community, nor in most other Western World countries. It would confirm George Orwell's worst fears about the "Anti-Sex League" and the "Thought Police".

Sub-section (a)

The 'laundry-list' of prohibitions detailed in this sub-section is quite preposterous. It could mean, for example, that medical, educational or even religious publications will be prohibited, that art galleries will be closed to anyone under 18 years of age, that Shakespearean plays will be illegal, that current affairs programmes and news bulletins will be prohibited, that live radio 'phone-in' programmes and live audience participation TV shows will be forbidden, not to mention innocuous magazines like 'Playboy', 'Forum', 'Gay News', 'New Direction', 'Parade', 'Zipper', 'Penthouse', 'Men Only' etc.

Its impact will be disastrous. Our literature, our art, our entertainment will be reduced to a common denominator of sanitized, sterilized, sanctified, soulless pap. It will only serve to make for a duller, more boring, more depressing, more repressed society and it must be firmly and totally rejected.

Regarding the listed depictions themselves, we can find nothing wrong with the perfectly natural activity of masturbation, as Willie Hamilton, M.P. for Fife Central commented in the House on 24th January (Hansard, Vol 90, No 43, Col 587). "Apparently it is to be illegal only if one takes a picture of it", he said.

The same could be said of sodomy, which is also a perfectly natural, sexual activity for many people, the same of oral/genital connection and the same of oral/anal connection.

We do not find anything obscene about genital organs or their depiction. We do not even find them 'lewd'. We deplore the inclusion of the word 'lewd', the first time it has been used in this area of the law. According to the Oxford English Dictionary its meaning is:-

(1) of speech and the like - rude, artless
(2) Belonging to the lower orders - common, low, vulgar, 'base'
(3) Of things - bad, worthless, poor, sorry, lascivious, unchaste.

This is far too wide and 'catch-all' a test qualification and will be a field day for the lawyers. If it must be included at all, and certainly in the interests of consistency, it should be replaced by the word 'obscene'.

Excretory functions are also a perfectly natural phenomenon and there is thus no logical reason for the list to include them.

Acts of cannibalism (Shakespeare's "Titus Andronicus" was cited in the House of Commons by Norman Buchan, M.P. for Paisley South (Hansard 24.1.86 Vol 90, No 43, Col 576)), bestiality, mutilation or vicious cruelty towards persons or animals feature often in literature, art and drama and certainly in news reporting (the Vietnam war, the Ethiopian famine, the Brighton hotel bombing). They too, therefore, should not be so listed.

Parliament specifically rejected a similar type of 'laundry-list' for inclusion in the 1981 Indecent Displays (Control) Act on the grounds that it was impracticable and unworkable. That consideration must surely likewise apply to this Bill and the sub-section (a) removed.

Sub-section (b)

This sub-section is supposed to be the central theme of the Bill and its chief purpose, that of the 'protection of children'. Notwithstanding that we maintain, like Willie Hamilton (Hansard 24.1.86, Vol 90, No 43, Col 582), that children do not need to be so protected from exposure to such material either in shops or on television, the sub-section relates not only to children but to all persons under the age of eighteen. Persons of sixteen years and over are legally entitled to consent to sexual intercourse and can marry but will not be permitted access to any material, any article depicting anything in the 'laundry-list' in sub-section (a) of this clause 2. (Marriage Act 1949, Section 2; Sexual Offences Act 1956, Sections 5 & 6) This is an absurd anomaly. Equally absurd and disturbing is the fact that absolutely nothing listed in the 'laundry-list' in sub-section (a) will be able to be included in any television programme. The inhibiting and stifling effect this will have on the free creativity of programme and film makers is truly horrendous. It is utterly outrageous and totally unacceptable.

The Bill's promoter, Mr. Churchill, claims that the more explicit type of sex magazine will still be available through licensed sex shop outlets. This is untrue since there are only about 70 such shops throughout the whole of England and Wales and many large connurbations like Coventry and Portsmouth refuse to grant such licences at all. (In Scotland and Northern Ireland there are none at all, although this Bill does not extend to these areas.) Even in Soho, in London, Westminster City Council has only granted six such licences. Why should so few retail outlets alone be entitled to market such publications when the small shop-keeper, bookseller or local newsagent is prevented from doing so and thus denied an important part of his income?

IV. CLAUSE 3.

Not contentious.

V. CLAUSE 4.

Section (1)

The title of the Bill is dishonest. Whatever it may claim to be, it is first and foremost yet another censorship Bill. That should be reflected in its title and it should more truthfully be known as the 'Broadcasting and Publications Censorship Act 1986'.

Section (2)

The 1959 and 1964 Obscene Publications Acts together with this Act, if passed, should together be known as the Censorship and Obscene Publications Acts 1959 to 1986.

Section (3)

An additional requirement should be attached to this section to allow a trial period. If not renewed, thereafter, the Act would lapse. After ".....with the date of the passing thereof" the following sentence should be added:-

'This Act shall continue in force until (date one year after coming into operation) and shall then expire, unless Parliament otherwise determines, and upon the expiration of this Act, sub-section (2) of section thirty-eight of the Interpretation Act 1889 shall apply as if this Act had been repealed by another Act.'

This qualifying sentence would be in line with that in Section 5 of the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act 1955.

Section (4)

Since the NCROPA is opposed to the Bill in its entirety, it is not concerned that its provisions do not extend to Scotland or to Northern Ireland, in spite of this ridiculous and illogical inconsistency, as Norman Buchan, M.P. for Paisley South, pointed out (Hansard, 24.1.86, Vol 90, No 43, Col 573).

18th February 1986

CONCLUSION

Britain prides itself on being a 'free society' and a champion of individual liberty and the freedom of expression. We all know that in a civilised society there is no such thing as total freedom and that, in the over-riding interests of all, certain restrictions on our freedom have to be accepted. However, such restrictions must always be kept to the very minimum.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was instituted to chronicle our basic freedoms and this was further amplified in the European Convention on Human Rights. The United Kingdom is a signatory to both these declarations. Very regrettably, however, this country's record in honouring those pledges has been at best poor, and at worst disgraceful. Nowhere worse has it been than in matters concerning the freedom of expression, where its draconian censorship restrictions, far from being kept to the minimum, as elsewhere, are massive and, furthermore, are being added to year after year. This is clear breach of both of those noble declarations.

It is an indisputable fact that the U.K. now has more censorship than virtually any other country of the 'free' Western World. (This is especially ironic when most other countries in the European Community have liberalised, or are in the process of liberalising, their laws and when one of the aims of that organisation is the harmonisation of the laws of member states.) Yet the purpose of Winston Churchill's private member's Bill is to increase U.K. censorship legislation even more and to increase it more savagely than ever before.

There are three important questions to be asked of the Bill:-

(1) What is the real purpose of the Bill?
(2) If enacted, will it work successfully?
(3) Why do we need it?

Mr. Churchill claims that the purpose of the Bill is the 'protection of children' from exposure to 'obscene' and/or violent material, on the assumption, presumably the such exposure harms them. However the Bill goes far beyond that 'protection'. It also 'protects' or rather prohibits adults, too, from being so 'exposed', irrespective of choice. Enactment of the Bill would inevitably bring about a ridiculous situation in which any material deemed unsuitable for children

would be banned for everyone on television and radio and, save for a handful of specialised, licensed retail outlets, anywhere else in public. In any case, the assumption that such exposure automatically harms children is fallacious. We believe that the emotive 'protection of children' banner is, once again, being used as a front for other devious intentions of increasing censorship.

The NCROPA certainly does not accept that this Bill is necessary nor that the majority of the public want it. Children are already more than adequately'protected' by an excess of other legislation. Television and radio is already subject to the control of and censorship by its governing watch-dog bodies, who, in their turn, are appointed by the Government and responsible to Parliament. Publishers, shopkeepers, newsagents etc. are already viciously restricted by the strait-jacket of a multitude of existing laws (most ofwhich Parliament should be repealing, instead of adding to their number). The chief responsibility for controlling children's reading, viewing and listening habits rests fairly and squarely on the shoulders of their parents. What adults choose to see is a matter entirely for themselves.

Over and above all these considerations, the Bill, if enacted, would be quite unworkable. It appears to have been drafted by a motorway contractor, so full of holes is it. We have already far too many arbitrary, vague and unnecessary laws on the Statute Book. The NCROPA, in common with all other sensible people in this country, has no wish to be saddled with more.

Let us assume, however, that there <u>is</u> a need (which we do <u>not</u>) to take some kind of action to 'protect' children in this area of explicit material - either sexual or violent (they are not inseparably intertwined, as many seem to assume). Is there a reasonable alternative to Mr. Churchill's Bill? We believe so. Parliament has seen fit to legislate in a much less rigid and prohibitory fashion with regard to many other things which are, or are considered to be, harmful to children. The sale of tobacco, alcohol, glue solvents etc. is <u>regulated</u> where children are concerned but it is not <u>prohibited</u> for adults. All those products are known, proven killers (one child dies every six days as a result of glue-sniffing). Parliament deems it an acceptable level of 'protection' simply to make it an offence to sell them to children. A similar regulation could be applied to the sale of 'adult' material to children whenever and wherever it was marketed or retailed.

The NCROPA very much regrets that Winston Churchill has allowed himself to succumb to the pressure of those well-known, but totally unrepresentative moral fascists who ceaselessly campaign for the legal imposition of their own narrow

beliefs and standards on all others. He has squandered his fortuitous high place in the private members' Bills ballot on a most untypically un-Churchillian, un-British, repressive measure. Drastic reform of the Obscene Publications Acts, and many other related Acts, is long overdue, but not, alas, in the retrograde direction Mr. Churchill has here taken. We beg Parliament not to follow, but to reject his Bill.

Prepared and published by the NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS (NCROPA) 18th February 1986

For further information contact the Honorary Director, DAVID WEBB, 15 Sloane Court West, Chelsea, London, SW3 4TD - Telephone number 01-730 9537