

Obscene Publications Acts were adequate to deal with the problem but Mary Whitehouse had written to deny this and talk about 'the young and vulnerable', by which she meant all of us, and to demand a classification body independent of the film industry. The only truly independent body he knew of was a jury. She had asked for an amendment to the Bill about whether or not video works were suitable for showing in the home, which was like seeking to prevent people getting drunk in their own homes. He was in favour of control of video 'nasties' but that bore no relation to the Bill, which was unnecessary and could even be described as evil.

The meeting was then open to speakers from the floor. A spokesman for a gay rights organisation said that he felt at risk and **Mr Hunnings** pointed out that this was an example of what he had referred to: the threat posed by the Bill to minorities, sub-cultures, political groups — anyone outside the commercial distribution system. **Patrick Nicholls**, M.P., claimed that children were insufficiently protected by existing legislation and claimed that there could be agreement on how prohibition could be enforced. **Mr Rosen** replied that the time between publication of the Bill and debate had been too short for agreement and **Mr Hunnings** said that it was not the State's business to replace irresponsible parents. However, the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act 1955, which dealt with horror comics, showed that it was possible to protect children, not by placing an entire class of publication under censorship, but by defining the problem and producing an Act to deal with it.

**Dr Christine Pickard** pointed out that porn dealers going out of business had lead to people producing their own, and home-made porn had circulated in schools for years. It seemed that doctors might be prosecuted for using

sex films in therapy. A spokesman for the Directors Guild of Great Britain agreed that the Bill would make problems of finance and distribution more difficult. A case could be argued in court but a censor one couldn't argue with and the end result could be a very watered-down product. Others expressed concern over the size of the fine which could be imposed without a trial by jury, and over the extension of police powers.

Other speakers described absurdities which used to arise in pre-censorship of plays, pointed out that changing tastes had lead to novels by Zola, once condemned, being available everywhere, and asked if those depraved people, the former censors, were all locked up somewhere! **Mr Rosen** pointed out that people would still be able to import 'nasties' for home viewing and **Mr Hunnings** said raids on people's homes were unlikely.

**Mr Eric Miller** wondered if any M.P. would oppose the Bill in debate and there were questions about future action. **David Webb** said that his organisation (National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts) was in touch with various M.Ps. People could put pressure on M.Ps. by making their views known to them and to the public. The meeting ended with expressions of good-will towards C.A.C. and the organisers felt it had been worth while.

*Mary Hayward*



**Mr Hunnings** appeared on *Newsnight* (BBC2) on the evening of the second reading of the Video Recordings Bill, in discussion with **Geoffrey Finsberg**, M.P., who had spoken in its favour. The presenter pointed out that the Bill proposed pre-issue classification of all videos and fines up to £10,000 for dealing in unclassified material, contrasting this with the after-publication censorship and 'deprave and corrupt' test provided by the Obscene Publications Act. During the discussion,



another early Campaign against Censorship of Art. Also the myriad celebrities he has met at functions, and on radio and TV programmes. Apart from husbanding the finances since 1965 he has set much store by close contact through extensive correspondence with many Society members.

### Edward Goodman

Ted Goodman is a practising solicitor who is concerned about freedom of expression which he believes is under threat in this country. He is a member of the National Council of the Campaign Against Censorship, the National Council for Civil Liberties, and the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts. Married last year with a son born on the day of our meeting at the House of Commons. He has been acting as Media Monitor as well as legal adviser, when necessary, to the Council since its inception. He is also the Council's librarian.

### Neville March Hunnings

Is a barrister by profession and a law publisher by trade, having edited *Common Market Law Reports* for the past two decades. His special fields of interest are European law and communications law. He is a member of the Law and Technology Committee of the International Association of Lawyers, where he heads a working party on the legal implications of computers, telecommunications and transborder data flow. He is also an active member of the International Bar Association committees on computer law and entertainment law and is joint author of a report prepared for the International Institute of Communications on *Satellite Broadcasting in Western Europe*. A member of the British Film Institute since its Great Russell Street days, he helped to found the Society for Film History Research and edited its journal *Cinema Studies* for seven years of its existence. He is a committee member of the Society for Theatre Research, being the Society's representative on the Theatres Advisory Council, and was for many years associated with Stephen Joseph and his theatre in the round. It was as an undergraduate at King's College London that he first became interested in censorship, an interest which developed into a doctoral thesis and later a book on *Film Censors and the Law*. This concern for freedom of expression and of information has now expanded into all areas affected by this principle and explains his somewhat iconoclastic approach to both copyright and privacy.

### John Lyons

Aged 30, officially described as a 'mature student', which is the only compliment any bureaucracy has ever paid him or is ever likely to!, he says. Happily co-habiting and the proud father of three young daughters, whom he would like to defend against corruption by the alleged moral majority. Interests within C.A.C.: promoting involvement of existing and new members. Feels there is a lot of scope for local C.A.C. branches, monitoring what is happening in their own areas and testing out ways of putting the Society's point of view across to the general public. He has been most active on the Council, circularising all the M.Ps. on the Video Recordings Bill and other issues of C.A.C. interest.

### Eric Miller

Born 1921. Territorial Army, pre-war. H.M. Forces 1939-46 — fighting for freedom(!). Married with two daughters, 2 granddaughters. Former Lloyd's underwriter and broker. Now retired. Believes in inalienable freedom of choice of the individual. Committee member of N.C.R.O.P.A. Assisted in compiling evidence to the Williams Committee.

### Arnold Rosen

Aged 43. Formerly in practice at the Bar in crime and common law chambers, now practises commercial and intellectual property law as a solicitor in central London. He was quietly dropped from the Defence team of the OZ prosecution on account of his robust defence of a member of the Angry Brigade. Now he claims to be a political neuter in terms of party politics but is excited by the lengths to which institutions will go to lead public attitudes and keep secrets from the same public. He believes most secrets exist to protect reputations, not for any good reason.

Also **John Calder**, the publisher and founder of DLAS, who has not yet been able to attend any meetings. Another member, **Eric Smith**, has resigned.

