NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

NCROPA

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NO/DAW/DP

19th December, 1980.

Miss J.E. Fairburn,
Room 762,
Home Office,
Queen Anne's Gate,
London, S.W.1.

Dear Miss Fairburn,

Meeting with the Home Secretary, 21st January 1981

Further to our telephone conversation and as requested, I have pleasure in listing below our main points for discussion with the Home Secretary at our meeting on 21st January 1981.

I. Our endorsement of most of the findings of the Williams Committee and our eagerness to see the Williams Report accepted by the Government but with certain major reservations, which are as follows:-

Me. (1) That all visual material (films and video-cassettes as well as books and magazines) should be treated by the law in the same way. (Page 164/5 & Page 156

Bill (2) That there should be no pre-censorship of films - only pre-classification.

Ted (3) That the Williams legal definition "what is offensive to

...../continued

reasonable people" is quite unworkable and unacceptable.

(4) That live sex performances should be allowed.

(5) That local authorities should have an obligation to grant licences to cinemas wishing to show "restricted" category films and shops wishing to sell "restricted" category publications.

(6) That private cinema clubs should continue to be allowed to operate as now.

(7) That all offences relating to visual material should be prosecuted in the same way and the right to a jury trial should always be upheld.

(8) That the burden of proof of any prosecution must always rest with the prosecution just as it does in every other type of offence in this country.

II. Our concern over the scurrilous and unwarranted attacks made upon the integrity of the members of the Williams Committee by some factions of the pro-censorship lobby and in particular by Mrs. Mary Whitehouse and Dr. John Court. We would also like to refute Dr. Court's subsequent submission in support of his previous arguments, which were categorically rejected by the Committee, and, indeed, other unsubstantiated attempts to discredit Williams' findings and dismiss them out-of-hand.

III. Our regret that, although more than a year has already passed since the Williams Committee reported to the Home Office, no indication has yet been given, firm or otherwise, of the Government's intention on this burning issue and our desire to urge the Minister to initiate Government action without further delay on the lines we have proposed.

Yours sincerely,

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