

David Kennington

NO/DAW/DP

9th February 1983

~~Ms~~ June Wyer,
Research Assistant,
The Anti-Slavery Society for the
Protection of Human Rights,
180 Brixton Road,
London SW9 6AT.

Dear Ms. Wyer,

Thank you for your letter of 5th January and my apologies for the delay in replying.

It was kind of your colleague to suggest that you write to us for assistance with your research on the sexual exploitation of children. I must make it quite clear, however, that the aims and activities of the NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS (NCROPA) are solely concerned with ridding this country of what we believe are its grossly repressive and totally unnecessary censorship laws, and thus bring us into line with virtually all other countries of the so-called "free" Western World which have long since had the great good sense to dispense with such harsh restraints on the freedom of the individual.

We believe that it should be the inalienable right of all consenting adults to choose for themselves what they see, read or hear. We are not opposed to the retention of measures to "protect" children (although this does not imply that we necessarily accept that they would otherwise be "at risk"), or very limited measures to "protect" those adults, even, who do not wish to be forcibly affronted by material which they would deem offensive. We condemn and always have done, child pornography but recognise that from puberty onwards, children are sexual beings and that human sexuality is a natural and delightful phenomenon which it would be quite wrong to disapprove of or suppress.

Coupled with "consenting adults", therefore, we always add the qualifying phrase "no co-ercion". We deplore the exploitation of children in any way, from their exploitation in sexually explicit material, if and where this occurs, to their exploitation by co-ercive, premature religious indoctrination, although we must make the observation that most children are not nearly so vulnerable as many adults would like us to believe.

I am enclosing, herewith, with our compliments, a copy of our written

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evidence to the Home Office Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship (the Williams Committee) which we hope will both interest and help. May I particularly draw your attention to chapter V Medical Aspects (p.12), compiled by the two doctors on our Committee, and chapter VII Answers to Objectors (p.26), objections on behalf of children, which I think are very relevant. I will not need to remind you, I am sure, that the basic finding of the Williams Committee was that sexually explicit material for consenting adults is harmless and should therefore, be freely and legally available.

For your further general information I enclose one of our promotion leaflets which summarises the aims of the N.C.R.O.P.A.

Your society, as its name indicates, exists to protect human rights. Our campaign, likewise, seeks to protect human rights. The curtailment of individual liberty and the freedom of expression imposed by the United Kingdom's draconian censorship laws is, we maintain, in direct contravention of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (articles 18 & 19) and the European Convention on Human Rights (articles 9 & 10), to both of which the U.K. is a signatory. We trust, therefore, that the Anti-Slavery Society's thinking on the issues I have herein discussed will be in line with our own and that we can count on its unequivocal support.

Yours sincerely,

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

P.S. Another publication which might be useful to your researches is a booklet called "Child Victims of Sex Offences" by T.C.N. Gibbens and Joyce Prince and published by the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency, 34 Surrey Street, Croydon CR0 1RJ, Tel: 01-680 2068.

Encs.