

~~GENCENSORED~~

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE REFORM  
OF THE OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS ACTS

N C R O P A

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The N.C.R.O.P.A. is affiliated to the National Council for Civil Liberties

NO/DAW/DP

13th May 1987

The Rt. Hon. Norman Tebbit, M.P.,  
Chairman,  
The Conservative Party,  
Conservative & Unionist Central Office,  
32 Smith Square,  
London, SW1.

*Norman H. Tebbit*

Last year Mr. Winston Churchill M.P. introduced a Private Member's Bill in the House of Commons to amend and extend the 1959 Obscene Publications Act. Happily, it failed to reach the Statute Book. This year Mr. Gerald Howarth M.P. introduced another, even more authoritarian Bill to do likewise and, as we all know, Mr. Howarth's Bill was backed by the Government. Again, happily, this Bill too has been lost by the announcement of the impending General Election.

The National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA) has been battling against state censorship for more than eleven years. During that time, however, we have witnessed, not simply subsequent Governments' satisfied acquiescence in the workings of the Obscene Publications Acts (and other relevant Acts), but a continual strengthening of their provisions by the introduction of numerous additional repressive censorship measures, e.g. the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, the Cinematograph Act 1982, the Indecent Displays (Control) Act 1981 and the horrifying 1984 Video Recordings Act.

Most of these Acts were introduced by Conservative M.P.s, ostensibly as private members' Bills, but, and again as we all know, with Government and therefore Conservative Party backing. It is nothing less than disgraceful that a political party which proclaims the "freedom of the individual" and "freedom of choice" as the cornerstone of its whole philosophy should espouse such diametrically opposed causes and thus ever increasing state 'nannyism'. The hypocrisy of so many of Conservative Party politicians in this respect can only bring the party into disrepute and I trust that, in future, a much stricter adherence to acknowledged Tory values and ideals will be demanded of its elected representatives.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the U.K. now has more censorship than virtually any other country of the so-called 'free' Western World. What is

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required here is legislation to liberalise our repressive laws, to bring us into line with these other truly 'free' states, not additional restrictions even more draconian than those to which the British people are already subjected.

On behalf of the largely silent majority of the citizens of this country, who are a much more tolerant lot than Governments give them credit for and who do not want to be told what they may see, read and hear, the National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts urges you to exclude from the coming Conservative Election Manifesto any proposals for extending state censorship, but to include proposals only for reducing it, and thereby remain loyal and true to Tory principles and beliefs.

Yours sincerely,



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