

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

4th August 1987

H.S.L. Dundas, Esq., CBE, DSO, DFC, DL,
Chairman,
Thames Television Ltd.,
Thames Television House,
306-316 Euston Road,
London, NW1 3BB.

Dear Mr. Dundas,

The National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts (NCROPA) regrets that your continuity announcer, in presenting last Wednesday's edition of "The Cook Report" (29th July, 8.30 p.m.) introduced the programme thus: "Next on Thames 'The CookReport' on Amsterdam's pornography pedlars." He should correctly have referred to Amsterdam's child pornography pedlars. There is a world of difference since adult "pornography" or, as we prefer to call it, "sexually explicit material", is sensibly not illegal in Holland, anymore than it is in France, Denmark, Italy, West Germany, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Greece, much of Australia, and the U.S.A.

Although we would question some of the methods used by Roger Cook and his team in this programme, we would not wish to quarrel in any way with its good intentions. As Superintendent Iain Donaldson said, child pornography is generally regarded as an abhorrent crime. That is because it involves the coercion of immature people. Adult "pornography", by and for freely consenting adults, does not.

The NCROPA has been campaigning in this country for the past eleven years for drastic reforms of our draconian censorship legislation, now the most repressive of virtually all other countries of the so-called 'free' Western World. Careless and inaccurate comments like your announcer's can only serve to assist the moral fascists of the pro-censorship lobby who seek ever more legal curbs on the freedom of expression, something which should be of deep concern to a public service television broadcasting company like yours.

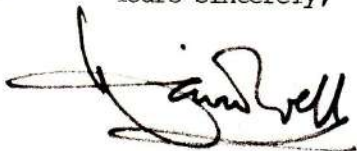
It is ironic that television itself should be contributing to their narrow, bigoted views and helping thereby to propel future television programme makers, lemming-like, off the cliff of free expression and into the sea of authoritarian censorship. I am sure you will not need to be reminded of two alarming attempts by M.P.s Winston Churchill and Gerald Howarth, in the last Parliament, to amend and extend the Obscene Publications Acts to television and radio.

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Fortunately both these alarming private members' Bills floundered. However, I must remind you of the commitment in the Conservative Party Election Manifesto to re-introduce Mr. Howarth's Bill, or one like it. The National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts implores you to stop playing right into the Government's hands. When, we wonder, will Thames TV - or, indeed, any other television company - produce a programme in which the kind of rational, un-emotive and common-sense approach to this issue, and which the NCROPA promotes, be put before the viewers? If for no other reason, in the interests of balance, such a programme is long overdue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Webb', with a horizontal line underneath.

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

Copies to: Mr. Richard Dunn (Managing Director)
Mr. David Elstein (Director of Programmes)
Mr. Barrie Sales (Controller of News, Current Affairs & Documentaries)
Mr. Mike Townson (Editor "The Cook Report" Central TV)
Mr. Roger Cook (Presenter "The Cook Report" Central TV)
Mr. David Justham (Chairman Central Independent Television Plc)