

~~GENCURED~~

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

30th October 1988

The Rt. Revd. William Westwood,
The Lord Bishop of Peterborough,
The Palace,
Peterborough,
Hunts.,
PE1 1YA.

John Bishop Westwood,

Thank you for your letter of 25th October in reply to mine of 14th October.

Whilst I have no wish to protract the matter, especially since we shall be putting forward our specific views in our forthcoming submission, I cannot allow your reply to pass without some observations on it.

- (1) Whenever I receive such a response as yours, I am pretty sure that I have prodded a raw nerve which almost certainly needed to be prodded. As a founding member of a body which is highly repugnant to many and one which will certainly incite high passions, I am prompted to remind you of former U.S. President Harry Truman's famous adage "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen". I don't somehow think the Broadcasting Standards Council's kitchen is going to be a place for faint-hearted, fragile hyper-sensitive souls.
- (2) I do not accept that my letter was "aggressive", as you imply. It expressed sadness and regret, but not a single note of aggressiveness.
- (3) The NCROPA's affiliation to the National Council for Civil Liberties is eminently appropriate. The NCCL's Charter of Civil Rights and Liberties includes Article 6 - Freedom of thought, conscience and belief, and Article 7 - Freedom of Speech and Publication.
- (4) The NCROPA's opinion, quite fairly and properly based on the previous track records of most religious groups, including particularly the Christian Church, is that they have little or no capability of, nor desire for, 'impartiality', are rarely 'sympathetic' towards other moral codes than their own, and can in no way be regarded as 'rational' when the entire framework of their religion is based on irrational, unsubstantiated belief, viz. 'blind faith'.

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- (5) The fact that the B.S.C. comprises of 25% (more, if Rees-Mogg's prominent Roman Catholic adherence is included, as rightly it must be) of representatives of religious organisations in a country where no more than 10% (and that is an estimate erring on the generous side) of the population has any meaningful attachment to any Church, is, in itself, a deplorable and worrying thing.
- (6) A cry of "despair of the possibility of reasoned discourse in a divided nation" coming from an establishment ecclesiastic like yourself, or indeed from any U.K. establishment figure, especially from those in Parliament, will, I am afraid, elicit from us no more than hollow laughter. The NCROPA is not responsible for creating the divisions in this intolerant and hypocritical nation. The day we arrive at "reasoned discourse" on this whole censorship issue, the NCROPA will concede that this presently censor-obsessed, infantile country has at last grown up.

We shall await the deliberations of the Broadcasting Standards Council with great interest. Their outcome will provide the real exoneration of any blame for my expressed views of October 14th - or, of course, otherwise. Both the NCROPA, and I, can only hope it will be 'otherwise'.

Yours sincerely,



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

P.S. The only reason I am the NCROPA's "Honorary" Director, is to indicate that I run this campaign entirely voluntarily, solely because of my cherished belief in, and commitment to, freedom of expression. I have no other motive and neither do I receive (nor expect to) a single penny in remuneration, let alone the £9,000 you and your colleagues on the B.S.C. (some of them much more) will receive. *tw*