

~~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

15th August 1990

The Editor,
"The Guardian",
119 Farringdon Road,
London,
EC1R 3ER.

Dear Sir,

I do hope that the undoubtedly good intentions of your leader comment "Child victims of a bad system" (13/8/90), calling for a Ministerial inquiry regarding the treatment needs of sexually abused children and their abusers, will not obscure the even greater need for the determination of the true causes of this regrettable syndrome, and then, hopefully, the means of its prevention.

In recent weeks the media has had a field day with lurid stories of 'snuff videos', satanic rituals, rampant incest, and the mass corruption of children by an army of paedophiles and pornographers. Almost all of these wild claims have been unsubstantiated, something that has in no way deterred the press from reporting them as case-proven fact, or our moral extremists from seizing upon ^{them} as typical examples of the product of our sick and sex-obsessed society.

Whilst such stories may make great sensationalist copy, they, sadly, paint a most distorted picture of the overall reality. Furthermore they are distinctly counter productive in helping to find solutions to the problem. For example, the supposed link between child pornography and abuse, spuriously claimed by some self-appointed 'experts' as the root cause of such behaviour, is in fact merely an effect. When police search the home of a child sex abuser, find a quantity of 'child pornography',

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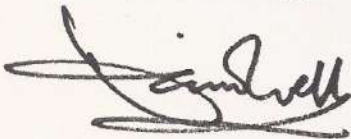
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and then attribute the abuser's crimes to its existence, it's rather like blaming salmon poaching on the presence of angling magazines in the culprit fisherman's cottage.

If every bit of so-called "pornography" were to be eliminated tomorrow, it would not make the slightest difference to the incidence of child sexual abuse. If this were not so, it would mean that in countries like Holland, France, West Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, for example, where real 'hard-core' "pornography" is freely - and rightly - available, the sex crime rates would be vastly higher than here. They're not. In many cases they're lower. Surely this indicates that the adult, open approach to sex and sexual material, and man's (and woman's!) natural passion for it, as adopted by our continental cousins, is much saner and safer than our own puritanical, heavily repressive and often hypocritical one?

The discarding of this uniquely British nannyist attitude is, I believe, essential for the creation of a sexually mature and honest society wherein its sexually unfulfilled, inhibited or inadequate members will find a much more sympathetic and helpful social environment in which they will not be driven into covert criminal sexual activities in order to satisfy their otherwise natural sexual appetites. A first significant step which must be taken towards achieving this change is the removal of much of our out-moded, draconian sexual censorship legislation, the notorious Obscene Publications Acts in particular. Far from encouraging criminal sexual abuse, this would not only be of positive help in creating a much healthier sexual climate for us and our children to be brought up in, but it would also bring us into line with nearly all of our so much more enlightened EC partners, in readiness for the genuinely full implementation of the Single European Act in 1992.

Yours sincerely,



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