

NO7DAW/DP

4th May 1991

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

Dear Sir,

Michael Grade was not "one of the leading campaigners" against the extension of the Obscene Publications Acts to broadcasting, as Duncan Campbell and Georgina Henry claim ("The Guardian" 3rd May). In fact, being quite content with the proposal, he did not campaign against it at all.

He first made his acquiescence clear in a speech to the 1987 Edinburgh Television Festival when he said that "broadcasters should not resist the imposition of the 1959 Obscene Publications Act". This was whilst he was still Director of Programmes at BBC Television and before he took over ~~the~~ Chief Executive at Channel 4 TV. In a subsequent letter to me, dated 7th September 1987, Mr. Grade re-iterated that view when he wrote "Yes, I have no objection to Broadcasting coming under the '59 Act - provided the test of obscenity remains as currently defined, namely a jury has to decide that the broadcast had the potential to 'deprave and corrupt'".

The NCROPA was understandably angered that he should have reneged on his former strong stand against such a ~~legal change~~ law when it was incorporated in both private members' Bills introduced into the House of Commons by MPs Winston Churchill and Gerald Howarth respectively. He was now further saying publicly elsewhere that nothing transmitted by any of the public television channels could ever be deemed legally "obscene" and ~~that~~ never be likely, therefore, to be prosecuted.

Since Michael Grade and Channel 4 TV deserve to be hugely congratulated for their splendid "Banned Season", I will resist any bursting temptation for a 'we told you so' gloat, now that they have been reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions for possible proceedings under the Act, for screening the "Sex and the Censors" programme. It would be a very sad day indeed for this country if Channel 4, or any other broadcasting company, were to be prosecuted in this way and I certainly have no wish to see it. On the other hand, such legal action might, perhaps, at long last, wake up the infuriatingly submissive British public to the outrageous and massive level of state censorship

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