

Hon. Secretary Tim Summers
Admin. Secretary Mary Marshall
SUPPORTERS

Individuals:
Helen Buckingham
Dr E. Chigier
Emmanuel Cooper
Dr Betty Dodson
Mark Dyer
Dr Patricia Gillian
Nigel Gilroy
Professor Jim Haynes
Phillip Hodson, Broadcaster
Dr Hazel Jones
George Melley
Dr Robert L. McGinley
Frank Moor
Helen Ludbrook, editor of Health and Efficiency
Dr Tuppy Owens
William Prosser MBE
Robin Ray
Nabil Shaban
Dr Robin Skymner
Annie Sprinkle
Barry & Rona Stock
Peter Tatchell
Revd. Chad Varah CBE
Dr Peter Webb, Reader in Arts History, Middx. University.

Clubs & Groups:

Black Widow's Web, Sweden
Gummi
The Firm
Flash Productions
Lady O Society
Lives of Secular Saints (S/M Archive)
The Natunast Society
New Zealand Swing Club
PM Club
Pipean Circle
Red Stripe Club
Rude Food Dining Club
Sadie Maizie's
SM Bisexuals
SM Dykes
SM Gays
Torture Garden
Tribal Rhythms
Club Wide World, USA
Club Whiplash

Law Reform/Pressure Groups

Cal-ACT
Campaign Against Censorship
Conservatives Against Sex Censorship
COYOTE
Disablement in The City
Feminists for Free Expression
New York
First
Theos Foundation
Australia
The Invisible Language Society,
Amsterdam
Israel Rehabilitation Society
Libertarian Alliance
National Campaign for the reform of the Obscene Publications Act
Lesbian & Gay Freedom Movement
National Campaign for the Reform of the Obscene Publications Acts
Outrage, Northern Ireland
Outrage
The Spanner Campaign
Society of Swingers

Organisations:

The Coventry Gallery
Cul D'Or Magazine
Delectus Books
Fetish Times
Forum Magazine
H.G. Publications
The Lifestyle Organisation
Lifetime Vision Ltd
Marquis
Paramour Magazine
The Private Case
SchlagZellen, Hamburg
Spectator, San Francisco
Starkers
Sussex Mailbox
Thud Magazine
Miss Vrea's Academy for Boys who want to be Girls
Wicked Woman, Australia



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AIMS:

- *Fight hypocrisy & Puritanism
- *combat police interference on clubs, erotic events and productions
- *improve press reporting of police action & sexual issues
- *get the 'morality' and 'obscenity' laws changed

Sexual Freedom Coalition

MINUTES OF THE SEXUAL FREEDOM COALITION PLENARY OF 27th NOVEMBER 1996

1. Introductions

- 21 signed the record, and a round of introductions was made. The meeting was chaired by Antony.

2. Agenda and Minutes

- The provisional agenda and the minutes of the 5th Plenary were agreed and appreciated. Mary thanked the meeting. Matters arising:-
- Elaine enquired what had become of the fund once begun to fight the 'Club Whiplash' legal battle. It was thought Robin hadn't been very successful in raising funds that time. The Coalition had distributed leaflets in Putney to publicise the Whiplash triumph in court and the waste of public funds. Tuppy said the coalition was for "a co-ordinated fight", but the clubs aren't very into it. The Coalition isn't an outfit for competition, but intended to bring people together.

Treasurer

The meeting received the Treasurer's report:-

EXPENSES

printing & photocopying	200.85
stamps	58.80
TOTAL	259.65

INCOME

TV appearance	75.00
Paper Sales	57.33
Subscriptions	60.00
Donations	75.00
Ticket Sales	16.00
TOTAL	283.33
plus	60.03
TOTAL	343.36

BANK BALANCES

23rd October	60.03
27th November	158.00

PETTY CASH

27th November	85.63
TOTAL 27/11	83.71
Grand Total	169.34

3. SFC Benefit - Night of Nostalgia - 30th December

- The Chair drew attention to the flyers for the Night, at the historic venue formerly known as Stallions, (Falconberg Court W.I.) now known as SubStation
- All the Club promoters and proprietors (past and present) in the scene have been invited.
- Tim promised a memorable night - it'd be the last night at Stallions before the building closes for redevelopment.
- It will only hold 220, so get tickets in advance!
- A number of additional volunteers: Jahnet and partner. Sam will do security.

4. 'Consenting Adults' No.2. Progress

- Tuppy said it was a frustrating month. Publishers' offers hadn't been quite right. Negotiations were continuing - and we are hesitant to publish No.2 ourselves. Cronos cannot guarantee the cash and are thinking of a 3-year contract, without pay. The next issue is due in late January. Spencer said producing a paper was a lot of hassle
- It was also a learning process, how to delegate for instance; however we are very pleased with the paper so far. There was discussion on distribution etc.. It's to be given free in clubs and so forth.
- Spencer spoke on media matters: someone in Time Out magazine was writing something positive on 'sexual freedom', including 'Spanner' and other things. He asked for guidance on what to emphasise. Tuppy referred to the SFC petition, which will aim for the amendment or abolition of all sex laws, and there was some discussion of the legal context.
- Nettie had supplied Spencer with the following: Dyke TV (CH4 documentaries) were involved in a series - "more polemic", and he offered to put people in touch with them. Also, a French TV reporter was seeking someone to give a guided tour around the London scene (without pay); any offers?
- Avedon referred to the European Court decision the previous day re. a banned movie by Nigel Wingrove (case since 1989, has been appealed all the way) - the film involves a 15th century nun having sex with Christ on the cross. The Commission had said "release the movie", but the Court found for blasphemy, saying it would offend Christians. The court, she said, had to look tough on such issues for the benefit of the British Estab. in current times.
- Some who were present took copies of the magazine to distribute.
- Sympathy was voiced over the printing problems.

5. Consultation with Cops, Customs etc.

- Tim reported writing to the Police (West End Central, Vice Squad, Scotland Yard) and to Customs & Excise. They are antipathetic towards giving the information we require; but at least when they crack down the next time we can point out our efforts to liaise and negotiate.
- Spencer referred to his correspondence with Customs & Excise, who had replied as follows:

Dear Mr. Woodcock,
You asked about the guidance given to our officers in determining the indecent or obscene nature of imported material. As I explained in my letter of 8 August, ultimately it is for the courts to determine what is indecent or obscene. However, we find it useful for enforcement purposes to provide our staff with practical guidelines to assist them when detecting material at import. This we base on current and recent court judgments. At present our Departmental guidance on this subject is not available to the public although we do intend to make it available in the near future under the Open Government initiative.

In our guidance the terms indecent and obscene are afforded their ordinary dictionary meanings, although we take into consideration the type of material which cannot be lawfully traded in the UK. Material is considered obscene and we would seek to prohibit importation if the material is either "sexually explicit" or portrays acts of gratuitous violence. For material to be sexually explicit in this context it must clearly show sexual acts taking place, such as penetration or oral contact with the genitals, in areas such as bondage or sado-masochism, key factors in assessing the possibly obscene nature of material would be tying up in unnatural positions, the use of gags and the depiction of violence in a sexual context, e.g. rape or torture.

For material depicting violence to be considered obscene for the purposes of the import prohibition it must be visually explicit. In general scenes of mutilation, cannibalism, dismemberment, violence against women and violence against animals for instance are likely to be considered obscene. Judgments are often made through comparison with films which have received a certification from the British Board of Film Classification and are freely and legally available in the UK.

The criteria for indecent material is a more complex area. Generally, the prohibition covers indecent photographs of children (ie those under the age of 16) to reflect the domestic legislation in this area.

I must stress that these are only guidelines and represent our interpretation of the law after taking into consideration the prevailing standards of society. Although we take account of the Obscene Publications Act when formulating the guidelines, so as to abide by European Court judgments in this area, our guidelines are not meant to be a direct reflection of that Act. Because of domestic legislation regulating the display and controlled sale of obscene publications, there may be occasions where Customs do not seek to prohibit material which under domestic legislation cannot lawfully be sold in certain establishments but which may be sold under licence elsewhere. I would therefore, advise you to consult the police for guidance on what type of material might breach the Obscene Publications Act and other domestic legislation in this area. I trust the above information will be of assistance to you. Yours etc.

He wrote back also, and no response so far.

- Elaine enquired if any precedent had been set in the Whiplash verdict, but advice was in the negative.
- Tuppy said it would be interesting to see what Mark Dyer - who won erotic oscar last year - is coming up with now.
- Michael spoke of satellite television's problems of censorship in Britain.

6. Petition

- Tuppy reported "a wonderful meeting". Ted Goodman has listed all the laws that need to be targeted for abolition, for a petition to be presented

to the Home Office. It comprises a list of the laws, with a proposed Bill attached. A proposal had been made to invite MP's to a small reception in Tuppy's flat for briefing purposes.

- It will cost c.£250 to print the petition.
- There was further discussion. There was a suggestion, not for the first time, that, as in the early days of Spanner "we went to universities and colleges".
- Sam asked if SFC would be at the SM Winter Pride at ULU, Malet St. on December 15th. Tim said this was desirable, "yest please"
- Michael enquired of Section 28, and yes it is on the list
- T. Summers will be going around Soho looking for signatures from 'the mac brigade etc.'
- 3/12/96 is next scheduled meeting of the Petition working group - Tim asked that people please keep in touch and make input.
- 'Byelaws in the Boroughs' were a problem which needed to be covered in the petition. One of the problems with the Planet Sex Ball was that there was no stripping licence at the Brixton Academy.

7. Prostitution Group and Prostitution Pride '97

- Tuppy reported a good meeting.
- Helen Buckingham must be right, she thought, to seek abolition of all laws around prostitution. HB wants to have a public (tv) discussion with say Kilroy (not the confrontational "bear pit" style of television "debate"); also a "pride debate" with sex workers, politicians etc.
- HB has wanted to do this for a very long time; people from abroad will come over; we could even have a whores' ball; we will have a leaflet, and will advertise. Tuppy asked for local knowledge of prostitutes advertising in local papers. "A-Z of massage parlours" is not illegal according to the police, which is technically wrong.
- John Blandford is to draw up a list of criminal and civil laws as well as local byelaws.
- There are 19 people in the group/ 7 prostitutes.
- Tim stated there were two distinct items of policy here:
 - a. We seek abolition of all laws relating to prostitutes.*
 - b. we are going to take on board a prostitutes' pride march in 1997*
- There was a vote taken on 'whether The Petition should be dealt with in unison with the Prostitute Pride march'. The result was 13 for, 1 against, 2 abstentions. **Carried.**
- The Chair referred to the Nevada situation, where legalised brothels "are like labour camps" and German state brothels where clients cannot be refused a service.
- There was discussion of relations with the English Collective of Prostitutes. Though there had been some reports of sex workers being disappointed with trying to move things through that organisation, it was stated they have done good things in the past, and it was hoped for good liaison in the future.
- Tuppy reported she was to be flown to San Francisco to talk at a whores' conference.
- Tuppy confirmed that the next meeting of the group would be January 19th, and would be open to

members of the SFC.

- There was a discussion of the need for some regulations for prostitutes - not complete deregulation.
- Jahnet stated the desirability of doing away with the "immoral earnings" scenario. The police are an ever present problem - they can hound you in that business. Education is one of the most important things for sex workers, she said.
- It was 'a hard road' to decriminalise and legalise, care and circumspection was called for.
- Alistair and others stated complete abolition would be good. In this context the need for workers rights etc. would have to be addressed; there was broad agreement with this
- Ian said it was a job like any other
- Avedon felt prostitutes are like writers, they are self-employed at the mercy of life's exigencies, but not in need of special laws.
- another called for "laws to remove the exploitation element"
- One guy spoke for the "clients" who shouldn't be lumped with the exploiters; he asked 'what mechanism is there for clients to assist?' Tuppy referred to a Johns' group in the Netherlands and said the SFC Prostitute working group would welcome clients as long as they had something to offer and weren't coming along to "meet whores".
- Michael said there was a need to discuss the issue of hostility from neighbours !
- There were no male prostitutes at the meeting, Tim said, and if anyone knows any one, get them to come to it.
- Avedon thought it important to let people in the industry make the decisions, and also that "if you have a good education you can be a good whore"
- Jahnet doubted that was necessarily so.
- Someone maintained abolition would be a negative step, and Tuppy replied that if the laws were abolished, the girls can get help when they need it.

8. Car Parks at Hampstead Heath & Cranford

- There was no report available, but there was a brief discussion.

9. Repression in Saudi Arabia

- Alistair spoke about the recent case of 24 filipinos who were lashed for homosexuality in Saudi Arabia.
- SFC should take the view that the struggle should transcend repressive nation state barriers. When Amnesty International (for instance) do things, should SFC get involved?
- Tim proposed that SFC, after the petition, pursues an international co-ordination of activity focussing on sexual repression around the world, "an international offensive" next year.
- There were many areas of concern, Spencer suggested, like: Transsexuals in Mexico (abuse of); Child Prostitutes in Thailand (abuse of)
- Another said there's a big difference between SM torture and the terror of tyrannical or corrupt states which practice torture.

10. Other Stuff

- Alistair speculated if there were any other areas into which SFC could expand
- Tim showed a cutting of a News of the World

expose, and asked "please send in more of these to the Coalition, and also photos if possible of those journalists".

- Sam enquired about wheelchair access to SFC meetings, etc., and suggested the Oasis club.
- There were other suggestions of venues as well, but The Hope venue was approved until something better is found.
- Other cases since 'Spanner'. The 'Bradford Burn Branding Case', where the husband was eventually let off because of conjugal rights - so the courts respond to hets (married) more leniently than gay men.
- Tim made it clear that all Working Group convenors should give a summary of their group's aims and activities from day one, before summarising progress for newcomers.
- Alistair called for more of the 'sub-groups people' to attend the plenary
- Tuppy announced that the SEX MANIACS BALL will be held in March 1997. Flyers were available to the assemblage. Please help, it's for the Outsiders Club, she said.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING 22nd January 1997
VENUE: Upstairs wine bar of THE HOPE pub,
15 Tottenham St., on the corner of Whitfield St.
W1, behind Goodge St. tube (close to Tott. Ct.
Rd. and Warren St. stations) at 8.00pm.