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Minutes of Meeting between Representatives of NCROPA  
and Winston Churchill MP held on 13th February 1985  
at the House of Commons

At the House of Commons Winston Churchill MP received by appointment two members of NCROPA namely David Webb (Director) and Edward Goodman (Legal Advisor). They discussed the Private Members Bill introduced by Mr. Churchill, namely the Obscene Publications (Protection of Children ~~et~~ Amendment) Bill.

The NCROPA delegates registered their total opposition to the measure and referred Mr. Churchill to the findings of the Home Office Williams Committee. He appeared to reject these and instead stated that pornography caused violent crime.

David Webb objected to further restrictions over television being added to the existing ones. He registered his objection to Churchill's descriptions, in the 24th January 1986 House of Commons Debate, of the people whom he was opposing as "television moguls" and also "pimps and pornographers", ie the publishers of adult magazines, whom he had stated made profits of "billions of pounds". Goodman said it was interesting to hear a Conservative MP attacking profits.

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Churchill said children were watching late night "obscene" television programmes. Webb said it was up to parents to stop this. Churchill replied that this was impossible and that some people did not have nannies to look after their children! Goodman pointed out that no public broadcasting system in the world sought to confine itself to children's programmes. He asked if the Bill would apply to cable television. Churchill said it would not.

Mr. Webb objected to the Section 2 prohibition of "lewd" depictions of genital organs. He said the dictionary definition of this word, which is how the Courts would interpret it, included anything "vulgar." Goodman added that the word was legally undefined, unlike the word "obscene", and would add to existing legal confusion. Churchill said he had purposely used the word to be more restrictive than the word "obscene".

Edward Goodman stated that the Bill only aimed to exclude certain material from places to which persons under the age of eighteen had access

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ie to confine to places to which only adults had access. He pointed out *that the*  
*Local Government* (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 was being operated  
in such a way that there were only *about* seventy licensed sex shops  
*throughout the country and even that number*  
was being reduced. Mr.Churchill retorted that under the Act communities  
rightfully had the right to exclude such places and in any event his Bill  
could not include an amendment to the 1982 Act.

Mr.Goodman said that therefore his Bill should be amended to take account  
of the limitation of outlets from which persons under eighteen *would be* excluded.  
Goodman therefore suggested that the safeguard of requiring the consent of  
the DPP to prosecutions be extended from Section I (Broadcasting) to Section 2.  
Churchill rejected this by stating that if shops stocked "obscene" material  
they should run the risk of private prosecution.

Goodman pointed out the absurdity of having both Sections I and 2 applying  
to television broadcasting *but* each imposing different standards. Churchill  
said an amendment was being considered to rectify this *whereby* one section *only*  
*would apply* to broadcasting and one only to places to which persons under  
eighteen had access.

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Mr. Goodman stated that the definitions of "obscene" depictions in Section 2 applied to not just covers, but also contents, which minors would not see. Churchill said this was because the Indecent Displays (Control) Act 1981 already applied to covers. The possibility of excluding the contents of shrink wrapped publications was then put forward and Churchill said it would be seriously considered.

The NCROPA delegates left with the impression that Churchill would only consider two amendments discussed viz (1) the separation between Sections 1 and 2 of broadcasting and of places to which persons under eighteen had access and (2) the exclusion of the restrictions on contents of publications which were shrink-wrapped.

As the meeting ended, David Webb recounted to Winston Churchill how his grandfather had founded the Entertainments Protection League to counter the activities of the then advocates of censorship.

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P.S. On the BBC Radio Programme "Stripped to the Essentials" broadcast on the 13th February 1986 Winston Churchill in answer to a question stated that he would accept an amendment to his Bill to ensure that newscasts were exempted. This was so that the prohibition on depictions of cruelty would not cause censorship of television news.