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# CAMPAIGN

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# CENSORSHIP

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AGAINST

THE DEFENCE OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS SOCIETY)

PLEASE REPLY TO:-

23 Budgen Drive  
Redhill Surrey  
RH1 2QB

26th November 1996

To: Tom Sackville MP  
Minister of State - Home Office  
Sir,

### THE VIDEO: "VISIONS OF ECSTASY"

Yesterday, you welcomed the decision of the European Court of Human Rights to uphold the banning of this video recording by the British Board of Film Classification. You are reported as having described it as "a video which would break the criminal law and offend millions of people." That is absurd. Until and unless condemned in court, the video recording is innocent of contravening the archaic English law of blasphemy (which only protects the Church of England).

Even if it would offend "millions of people," that is no justification for banning it. As John Stuart Mill wrote: "if all mankind minus one were of one opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind." Democracy does not mean unbridled tyranny by the majority, but respect for the right of freedom of expression of the partly non-Christian minority. In any event the video recording is being shown lawfully throughout the rest of Europe and in Japan and the USA (by Manga Films), without protest.

You said the ban "is an effective safeguard for the public." This is communist nannyism. As the French Minister of Culture, Jacques Lang, declared: "The State has no right to prevent citizens from seeing what they choose."

You welcomed the fact that the United Kingdom has the "strictest classification system" in Europe. What you refer to is British State censorship of video recordings and films. It is ironic that, shortly after censorship has been abolished in Eastern Europe, you praise it here. As Nigel Wingrove, director of the video, stated: "I don't think that's anything for the government to be proud about."

Yours for freedom of expression (even irreligious),

E Goodman  
Chair of CAC