

# CAMPAIGN

# AGAINST

# CENSORSHIP

(THE DEFENCE OF LITERATURE AND THE ARTS SOCIETY)  
18 Brewer Street, London W1R 4AS Telephone: 01-439 7827/8

PLEASE REPLY TO:-

ON 25TH SEPTEMBER 2000 CLLR GOODMAN, CHAIR OF CAC, ATTENDED A LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE FRINGE MEETING AT BRIGHTON ON DIGITAL TELEVISION. HE ASKED CHRIS SMITH, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CULTURE, WHY BRITAIN WAS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN EUROPE TO PROSCRIBE SATELLITE TELEVISION STATIONS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT A SMART CARD HAD TO BE USED AND VIDEO CLASSIFICATION HAD BEEN LIBERALISED. SMITH REPLIED THAT IT WAS TO PROTECT CHILDREN, BECAUSE BUYING A VIDEO RECORDING WAS DIFFERENT TO TELEVISION.

LATER IN THE DEBATE, LABOUR MP ANNE EAGLE DECRIED THE LARGE NUMBER OF "PORN CHANNELS" ON DIGITAL TELEVISION AND ASKED HOW PUBLIC TASTE COULD BE IMPROVED AND ADVERTISEMENTS REDUCED. FROM THE PLATFORM, STUART PREBBLE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF ONDIGITAL, REPLIED THAT IT WAS UP TO PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS, LIKE THE BBC, TO DO THAT.

AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION DURING THE CONFERENCE, GOODMAN MET LABOUR MEP, MICHAEL CASHMAN, WHO AGREED THAT BRITISH TELEVISION CENSORSHIP WAS ABSURD AND STATED HE WOULD TRY AND HAVE WORD WITH CHRIS SMITH ABOUT IT.

ON 26TH SEPTEMBER 2000 CLLR GOODMAN, CHAIR OF CAC, ATTENDED A LABOUR PARTY FRINGE MEETING AT BRIGHTON ON "INTERNET REGULATION: TAMING THE TIGER" DAVID KERR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE INTERNET WATCH FOUNDATION FROM CAMBRIDGE, ASKED FOR SELF-REGULATION BASED ON SELF-LABELLING BY PROVIDERS, BACKED UP BY FREE SOFTWARE FILTERS. HE POINTED OUT THAT, BECAUSE OF USE OF THE CONSUMER HOT LINE SYSTEM IN BRITAIN, GERMANY, USA AND ELSEWHERE, CHILD PORN PROVIDERS WERE BEING APPREHENDED. AS A RESULT ONLY 4 PER CENT OF ILLEGAL CONTENT NOW ORIGINATES IN THE UK. HE SAID THAT THE VIDEO CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM WAS INADEQUATE, BECAUSE IT VARIED FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY AND DID NOT INDICATE CONTENT, SO INDIVIDUAL TASTE AND PARENTAL CONTROL WAS UNCATERED FOR. INSTEAD HE ADVOCATED THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF DIFFERENT SIGNS FOR VIOLENCE , SEX, SWEARING, RACIAL ABUSE ETC.

PATRICIA HEWITT, MINISTER FOR E-COMMERCE AT THE DEPT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY, STATED THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED IN CO-REGULATION BY THE STATE AND THE INDUSTRY. SHE SAID THIS WOULD BE SET OUT IN THE COMMUNICATIONS WHITE PAPER TO BE PUBLISHED 18 DECEMBER 2000. SHE WANTED THE SAME STANDARDS TO APPLY TO ALL ELECTRONIC MEDIA. GOODMAN, THEREFORE, ASKED HER WHY HER DEPT DEALT WITH INTERNET & TELEVISION , WHEREAS FILM & VIDEOS CAME UNDER THE HOME OFFICE. SHE SAID THAT THE COMMUNICATIONS PAPER WOULD ADDRESS THAT. GOODMAN THEN PROTESTED AGAINST THE ORWELLIAN PROVISION IN THE RIP ACT MAKING IT A CRIMINAL OFFENCE NOT TO DIVULGE ONE'S ENCRYPTION KEY WORD TO THE POLICE ON DEMAND. HEWITT REPLIED THAT THIS WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE WERE STORING ILLEGAL MATERIAL IN THEIR ENCRYPTED BANK RECORDS ! SHE ADMITTED THAT OTHER COUNTRIES DID NOT HAVE SUCH A LAW, BUT SAID THAT THE UK WAS LEADING IN THIS FIELD ! SHE SAID THAT A SIMILAR PROVISION, REQUIRING LICENSING OF INTERNET PROVIDERS, WAS ATTEMPTED IN THE NETHERLANDS-BUT SUSPENDED BECAUSE OF A PUBLIC OUTCRY.

STEPHEN BALKAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNET CONTENT RATING ASSOCIATION (22 OLD STREET, BRIGHTON BN1 1EL), TOLD GOODMAN THAT THE USA HAD ABANDONED ATTEMPTS TO FORCE DE-ENCRYPTION,