

CAMPAIGN

CENSORSHIP

AGAINST

PLEASE REPLY TO:-

THE SECRETARY
6th August 2001

To: Beverley Highes MP
Minister of State Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1

Dear Madam,

IMPORTATION OF OF OBSCENE MATERIAL

You are reported as having sated that the importation of "obscene" material is so important that it should be a serious arrestable offence under the Criminal Justice and Police Act. Why ?

This draconian measure against a victimless crime will increase the persecution of sexual minorities, such as gays, bringing visual material from countries where it is lawful (ie most of the rest of the world). British citizens have a human right to import viewing matter of their choice. In any event, the United Kingdom is a pluralist society with no consensus as to what is "obscene," let alone whether it should be illegal. The application of this new power will thus be capricious, arbitrary and unpopular.

Such piecemeal legislation adds to the chaos of English obscenity laws. The Home Office Williams Committee (Cmnd 7772) stated that they were a mass of conflicting statutes and common law, all of which should be repealed and replaced by one comprehensive measure defining who is trying to protect whom from what and why.

It is sad that ministers are still failing to heed this advice and instead supporting the Orwellian "Anti-Sex League" in the mistaken belief that there are votes in it. In fact the great British public is no longer predominantly grundyist, as shown by the survey conducted by the British Board of Film Classification in 1999 .

Yours for freedom of expression,

E Goodman
Chair of CAC