

CAMPAIGN

AGAINST

CENSORSHIP

PLEASE REPLY TO:-

ON THE 2ND OCTOBER 2001 CLLR TED GOODMAN, CHAIR OF CAC, ATTENDED A FRINGE MEETING AT THE LABOUR PARTY ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN BRIGHTON REGARDING THE COMMUNICATIONS WHITE PAPER. THE MINISTER FOR BROADCASTING, DR KIM HOWELLS, STATED THAT THE CONSULTATION PERIOD WOULD LAST UNTIL 2002 WHEREUPON A COMMUNICATIONS BILL WOULD BE INTRODUCED. HE SAID CONTROL OF BROADCASTING WOULD BE VESTED IN OFCOM, BUT IT WOULD BE CONCERNED WITH CARRIAGE AND CONTENT FOR CONSUMER PROTECTION, NOT TASTE AND DECENCY. IT WOULD REPLACE THE PATCHWORK OF EXISTING REGULATORY BODIES. JAMES HARDING OF THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER DECLARED THAT OFCOM SHOULD HAVE AUTHORITY OVER THE BBC. THE MINISTER STATED THAT THE BBC MUST CONTINUE TO SUPPLY PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING PAID FOR BY THE LICENCE FEE AFTER ITS CHARTER EXPIRED IN 2006

THE MAIN PROBLEM THE GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED WITH WAS TO TRY AND REPLACE ANALOGUE TELEVISION SETS WITH DIGITAL ONES IN ALL HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT RESORTING TO UNACCEPTABLE COMPULSION. SURVEYS REVEALED THAT 40% OF THE BRITISH POPULATION DID NOT WANT DIGITAL. ON THE CONTINENT THAT TOTAL WAS LESS.

GOODMAN ASKED THE MINISTER WHETHER OFCOM WOULD REPLACE THE BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CLASSIFICATION THEREBY STANDARDISING CONTROL OVER VIDEOS WITH TELEVISION (INCLUDING SATELLITE CHANNELS). HOWELLS REPLIED THAT NO DECISION HAD YET BEEN TAKEN ON THE FUTURE OF THE BBFC.