

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CENSORSHIP

NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.45, Friday, 16th November, 2001, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Present: Ted Goodman (Chair), Dave Bird, Nigel Meek, Basil Stein, Mary Hayward.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Kent Boulton, Chris Hardman and Mark Taha.

2. The Minutes of the 13th July meeting were signed as correct.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

i. Communications white paper - Mary Hayward had received the report on responses to the white paper. The list of respondents contained approximately 260 names - organisations and individuals. Large amounts of the report were essentially the industry talking to itself, but in the sections of importance to the Campaign it should be noted that most respondents were opposed to a single regulatory body to include the internet and in favour of the BBFC remaining a separate body. Controls on political and religious broadcasting and advertising were generally supported. Near the end of the report it is suggested that the current procedures for handling breaches of the regulations - enforcement and appeals - may be inadequate under the Human Rights Act (Article 6).

ii. Department of Culture - Mary Hayward had written but the reply was a brush-off.

4. Balances: HSBC - £395.81p, Girobank - £59.69p.

5. Chairman's report

i. At the Labour party conference Ted Goodman attended a fringe meeting on the Communications white paper. The Minister for broadcasting spoke but was mostly concerned about consumer resistance to digital television. (Copy of report attached.)

ii. Ted Goodman had been invited to speak to the Society for Individual Freedom about censorship in Britain.

6. Members' reports

Nigel Meek - Liberty had a new director of campaigns, Mark Littlewood, who is a Libertarian Alliance supporter. He may be useful, but he may have been appointed as a 'we are not Blairites' gesture.

Basil Stein - no report this time.

Dave Bird - apologised for inactivity due to health problems. Members wished him a speedy recovery.

PTO

7. Secretary's report

i. Brass Eye - Mary Hayward wrote to Channel 4, the ITC and the Broadcasting Standards Commission supporting the showing of the programme satirising anti-paedophile hysteria. She received no reply from the ITC, a thank-you from C4 and a copy of the BSC's finding. She reported that on the whole they found in favour of the programme. There were a total of 246 complaints but 171 letters supporting the programme. She also did a soundbite for Talk Radio.

ii. Incitement to religious hatred - Mary Hayward distributed copies of part 5 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill, which would criminalise 'incitement to religious hatred' by amending existing law on incitement to racial hatred. (Council members please note for the future - so long as no disaster befalls the computer, Mary Hayward can arrange for Bills to be downloaded from the parliament website and all or part of them to be printed and distributed - or get your own at www.publications.parliament.uk .) Agreed that Mary Hayward should liaise with other interested organisations (eg. National Secular Society) and prepare CAC's representations to parliament.

Dave Bird suggested that a representative of CAC might attend the NSS AGM and thought that he would be able to interest a contact at Channel 4 in CAC's (and others') opposition to part 5 of the Bill.

iii. The Journalists' Handbook - actually a quarterly magazine - had asked for CAC's views on media coverage of September 11th and after. Mary Hayward to reply to them.

iv. Secrecy, disinformation, propaganda - Mary Hayward had written a personal statement for use as a basis for future discussion. Copies to be distributed with the minutes.

8. No other business.

9. Date of next meeting - mid to end January, date to be arranged.