

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CENSORSHIP

NATIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.45, Friday, 8th March, 2002, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

Present: Ted Goodman (Chair), Steve King, Nigel Meek, Basil Stein, Mary Hayward.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mark Taha.
2. The Council records with sorrow the death of Kent Boulton; a good friend, a loyal supporter and a brave man.
3. The Minutes of the 16th November meeting were signed as correct.
4. Matters arising from the minutes

- i. The Brass Eye satire on anti-paedophile hysteria was one of three nominations for the Royal Television Society's comedy award.

- ii. The 'incitement to religious hatred' section was dropped from the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Bill. Mary Hayward suggested that the section may have been a 'sleeper' - something the government was prepared to drop in order to get the rest through. However, it was likely that the idea would re-surface, in which case the experience of fighting it this time would be useful.

The fact that Hansard reports are available online the following day enabled Mrs. Hayward to ensure that CAC's material was up-to-date and to target MPs whose speeches and voting record showed that they were sympathetic to us on this issue. Her first mailing drew 8 replies, ranging from postcards to quite long letters. The second, larger mail shot (211 MPs) drew another 7 cards and 9 letters. All the letters were different - no two people responded to quite the same points or in quite the same way. There was no party political consensus - there were replies from members of all three main parties.

The Council thanked Mrs. Hayward for her work.

5. Balances: HSBC - £226.59p, Girobank - £40.69p

6. Chairman's report

- i. Ted Goodman had written to Devon and Cornwall police about a case in which a Newquay shopkeeper was fined £1,000 for displaying teeshirts with 'Fuck me, I'm famous' printed on them. Their reply did not explain why the case was brought.

- ii. Mr. Goodman had given a talk to the Society for Individual Freedom and been well received.

7. Members' reports

Steve King - drew attention to a case under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act involving encrypted material.

PTO

PLEASE NOTE: surveillance in itself is outside CAC's remit. It becomes an issue for us only when it leads to the material being censored. The extent of any 'chill effect' is unknown and would be difficult to quantify.

Basil Stein - no report this time.

Nigel Meek - he is the contact person for the Society for Individual Freedom (libertarian, right-wing, see www.individualist.org.uk). He is looking for articles on censorship for publication in Society's journal, The Individual. Mrs. Hayward's piece on secrecy would do for a start.

8. Secretary's report

i. Somebody wanted to open a sex shop in Portsmouth - on a main shopping street, not in a back alley. Mrs. Hayward heard about it when the anti-sex brigade distributed flyers to parents at her granddaughter's infant school. CAC wrote a letter to the city council licensing section supporting the application, but the applicant, Nick Rainbird, decided not to go ahead with it.

Ted Goodman said that an application for a sex shop in Reigate went through without a murmur.

ii. A report in the Independent (18th Feb.) drew attention to clauses in the Export Control Bill, now before Parliament, which would give government powers to see academic papers before they were published and suppress them. (Previously patents could be suppressed for defence reasons but not scientific papers.) The DTI says the law would exempt 'basic scientific research', but the decision on whether research was 'basic' would be the DTI's - the scientist would have to ask them. The DTI would be able to alter the areas covered when it wanted to. They are claiming that the law would be used to cover 'objects or concepts' which could be used for weapons but medical schools might need a licence to teach foreign students, as would exchanging e-mails with scientists overseas.

9. Liberty AGM - Mary Hayward to attend for CAC.

10. Newsletter

i. Nigel Meek suggested an addition to the contents - item 9, subscription renewal appeal. Agreed.

ii. Mr. Meek also suggested using A4 size, not A5, because it would be easier to produce (and so cheaper). Agreed. Mrs. Hayward to experiment and find out how many sheets we could send without going over the weight limit for the lowest rate of postage. (It's 9 sheets of ordinary typing paper).

iii. Copy could be sent in electronically as a text file, ie. an attachment.

But PLEASE NOTE that attachments sent to Mary Hayward will be deleted unless she has been told to expect them. This is because the computer used is jointly owned with her partner and he's nervous about them.

11. There was no other business.

12. Date of next meeting - mid to end June (after Liberty AGM)