

CAMPAIGN

CENSORSHIP

AGAINST

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

November 1983

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Defence of Literature and the Arts Society grew out of the Free Art Legal Fund, established for the defence of Last Exit to Brooklyn. The sponsors of the Fund felt there was a need for a continuing organisation which would assist publishers, writers and artists who were threatened by censorship and campaign for fairer and more rational laws. An Executive Committee was formed and in 1968 the Defence of Literature and the Arts Society was set up.

The main principle underlying the Society's work was opposition to censorship for adults. We believe that the repressive dangers of censorship outweigh any possible benefits, and that what is acceptable for adults to read, see or hear should be decided by personal judgement and taste, not by the law.

For many years the Society was in the forefront of the struggle against censorship in Britain and the ever active lobbies working to restrict our freedom of speech and expression. It gave help and advice to publishers, lawyers and others on the law and on tactics in specific cases.

Members of the Society have given evidence in court for defendants involved in prosecutions, and have taken part in TV and radio broadcasts and public debate on the subject of censorship. Meetings were held for members and the public.

The Society assisted a parliamentary group composed of MPs and Peers from all the major parties and from time to time gave evidence to the Government and official committees.

The Films Committee of the Society waged a major campaign to reform the anomalous and restrictive law concerning film censorship in this country.

At a Special General Meeting on 17 May 1983, the Campaign Against Censorship was launched to continue the work formerly undertaken by the Defence of Literature and the Arts Society.

It was agreed that the aims of the Campaign should be based on the following four principles:-

1. The right to obtain and impart knowledge.
2. Freedom from censorship.
3. Freedom for creative artists to present their perceptions, interpretations and ideas.
4. Freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, politics or religion.

Following Lord Gardiner's retirement from the office of President, Sir Roy Sha^W_A formerly Secretary General of the Arts Council, has accepted the National Council's invitation to succeed him.

The task of reorganisation and reactivation occupied the ten-member Council during the following four months. Concurrently the Campaign embarked on a full programme to create greater awareness of the need for intellectual and artistic freedom, and to widen support for the Campaign against Censorship.

If you would like to join the Campaign (Subscription is £5 pa or £2.50 for students and Senior Citizens) or to receive further information please write to the address below.

Enquiries to the Secretary, 25 Middleton Close, Fareham,
Hants, Tel: 0329-284471