

Present: Lynn King, Charlie Campbell, Anna Gronau, June Callwood, Cyndra MacDowall, Carol McBride, David Poole, John Ferguson, Av Isaacs, Nancy Kembry

"THE MOST POWERFUL PRESSURE GROUP IN THE COUNTRY"...Mary Brown, Chief Censor.

1. Status of Court Case: At this point, three films have been submitted by OFAVAS for exhibition. They are RAMEAU'S NEPHEW, M. Snow; The ART OF WORLDLY WISDOM, B. Elder; AMERIKA, A. Razutis, on February 14/85. There has been no response to date. There was discussion regarding the fact that the sections in the new Bill/Theatres Act which deal with distribution have not yet been proclaimed. David Poole will write a letter asking the Board to explain their scheduling of this phasing in of the new sections.

Video Situation: OFAVAS has received the Video Distribution License and will send in various tapes as they become available. One is by Lisa Steele & Kim Tomczak; the others, from Mr. Rankin (Adult film distributor) will be viewed by Advisory Board members on Mon. March 11 at Charlie's house, 72 St. Anne's Road/7:30 p.m. (2 bl. s. of college, w. of Døvercourt) in order to determine the advisability of using this material in our court case. There was discussion about Rankin's position regarding the appearance of his being in opposition to the Censor Board and how that may affect future ratings with them. There was also discussion regarding going to his national distribution centre in Montreal but this question is not yet resolved. Charlie pointed out that these types of films are perfect for our case as they have already been acquitted of obscenity charges, and by the Censor Board ordering cuts to the films this provides the basis for examining the duplicity of their role viz. provincial/federal jurisdiction with respect to obscenity. The other videotapes to be sent will be by Frank Sommers, sex education films. The idea is to send in a broad range of material to the board which covers many areas of sex/films/videos, and hopefully, something will be charged! At that point an appeal will be made to the Board and then another court case will begin with respect to the new Theatres Act.

It should be noted that the decision to acquit the Rankin films was based upon the counsel of June Rowlands- that, in her opinion, these films were not obscene.

It was decided to hold a press conference when a decision re. the films has been made.

OFAVAS has a license to distribute/exhibit 16mm. and video. The license will be renewed (Cyndra will check this with respect to the time period of the license/fees, etc.)

2. BILL 82: There are or will be, very soon, double the number of Censors on the Board. David P. pointed out that there have been over 600 applications. June noted that AUSTIN CLARKE, author, is on the Board. The major effort with this bill is to expand their bureaucratic capabilities. There was some analysis as to how and when the implementation of the Act will be staged, and what kind of strategy could be used to put pressure on the Board. Cyndra will request from the Liberal in the House a question regarding the scheduling of the Bill, from OFAVAS. Charles pointed out that the three films will address the constitutional question, and that her standards, which are now clearly spelled out, are a duplication of the criminal code provisions. Other tapes, films, etc. will raise secondary questions regarding the Act itself.

3. SUMMER AGAINST CENSORSHIP

No response has been heard from the various letters sent to Susan Fish regarding how the Bill will affect art film/video distributors. Nancy Kembry pointed out that the new name will be COCA (Committee on Censorship in the Arts) and that the continuing emphasis of the group will be to distribute materials regarding events on censorship in the arts, first on a provincial level, then national. COCA will be asking for membership fees in order to have a base from which to do mailings, etc. There may be an event in the spring re. censorship, which is videotaped, to be sent out to various groups for discussion and update. The event would take the form of a panel discussion re. the questions of censorship in the art community, etc.

4. 6 DAYS OF RESISTANCE: This is an event of 6 days of open screening of films/videotapes which have not been submitted to the Board. Individuals and co-sponsors are being called for. Charlie recommended that OFAVAS not participate in this event which calls into the question the issue of prior screenings before our Court Case. It was felt that we should not be seen to break the law before the case has come up, and he expressed this in an open letter to OFAVAS which is included in this group's material.

5. FEMINISTS AGAINST CENSORSHIP: This group is supporting the 6 Days Of Resistance. Next meeting will be middle to end of march. The Book Launch of WOMAN AGAINST CENSORSHIP was a success, and everyone felt that the book looks and reads well...it is or will be available at the Women's Bookstore, Pages in the very near future. Congratulations!

6. "NOT SO SNAPPY ANSWERS" or THE TWENTY MOST-ASKED QUESTIONS
This is a collection of questions and responses compiled by David Poole which can be used for speakers, etc. David pointed out that Thelma's material in the appendix of Women Against Censorship will be invaluable in finishing this page. He will have it ready by the next OFAVAS meeting.

7. NORTH YORK UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S PANEL: Cyndra spoke at this event, along with Thelma McCormack, and others. After the panel, the group sent a strong statement to the Hastings County Board with respect to their strong reservations with respect to censorship. Hastings County have sent out an anti-pornography mandate to all Board of Education declaring war! June pointed out that the Writers Union has a manual which is used in communities in order to evaluate books being "censored". She noted that the problem is that new books simply do not appear on the list for recommendation. This is surely a case of prior censorship, of the incidious silent variety! The question was raised regarding what Schools, Libraries will now do with videotapes...this discussion was long and lengthy. David P. noted that the Libraries need help in this area, in presenting their arguments for tapes being included in their collections. It was recommended that he ask them what specific materials they might need, and that perhaps the writers union material could be adapted in some form of a questionnaire. June pointed out the necessity of including questions and explanations with respect to why the materials should be there in the collection, not simply responding to why they should be taken out! Libraries are now worried about RESTRICTED ratings on tapes. David will send along info. re. what we are doing, a Bibliography, etc. with his questions to the Libraries, and also to the Ontario Film Association, who should be acting as the centre for this issue, but are not...this is the group who works with educational distributors.

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Cyndra, June and David Poole will co-ordinate putting this package together for the Libraries.

8. REPORT ON ADVISORY BOARD

New members include Av Isaacs, Nancy Kembry and Carol McBride.

Other people being approached at this point are Jane O'Hara (John Ferguson will ask her); John Fraser, from Dalhousie University (June will contact); Thelma McCormack (Anna G. will contact)

9. Other Business

-Carol McBride suggested her idea of doing a feature-length documentary with respect to censorship. Discussion centre around existing material/lack of same, and also funding possibilities. June C. discussed the pornography workshops which are conducted and will provide information on these as a possible model. She will continue discussions on this project at next meeting, but it was felt that we have the resources to do the research and that the project was a good idea.

-Malcolm sent in a report re. John Ince - he is proceeding with his court case with respect to importing obscene materials (which were not for distribution but for private use only). Charles suggested that the case may come before Supreme Court before ours, and that also, this case covers some areas which are issues regarding what is proscribed by law.

-FUND-RAISING- OFAVAS needs bridging money...immediately....A mailing will be sent out to approx. 30 Patrons asking for donations to start up the next case. An event may or may not be staged in the spring, but Anna G. will contact Q-107 as they are still interested in the idea of a fund-raising event for OFAVAS. Cyndra will make an application to Legal Aid as our unemployed Director, for the court case, in order to have a decision/rejection (?) on paper. June felt that there must be funds available for a charter case. Av will send Cyndra his own ticket list (from Gala) for people to include in this mailing. Another Gala????!!!

NEXT OFAVAS MEETING: MONDAY, APRIL 1/85 at 7:30 LYNN KING'S-60 Kendal Ave.

Be there!!!

Minutes: C. McBride