

C.A.P.

ACTION

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arguments

# HOW TO COMPLAIN.



This section is designed as an all-purpose guide to expressing your objections to pornography. It is divided into ten parts. Parts One to Eight include advice about how to approach newsagents and retailers; your local authority; your M.P.; T.V. and Radio broadcasters; newspapers and magazines and 'watchdog' bodies like the Advertising Standards Authority. Part nine sets out some basic ground rules about how to maximise the effectiveness of your protest. Finally, Part ten is a list of useful addresses.

We've tried to make this section as comprehensive as possible and we hope that it will prove a valuable resource for both individuals and groups.

Don't hesitate to make your objections known. You have the right to say what you think about pornography - the question is how, where, when and who to? We hope this section will provide some of the answers.



## a. Background:

Both W.H. Smiths and John Menzies, believe it or not, have a background of refusing "controversial" publications or those which might offend, and until fairly recently this included pornographic magazines. Not any more! But if an approach to the shop manager does not work, an appeal to regional or national management might be received more sympathetically because of this background. Both Smiths and Menzies have an official policy of not stocking publications which customers find offensive - so this is always a good argument, especially if there are several people complaining and they are good customers for the shop.

## b. To distribute or not to distribute? - Who decides:

Periodicals have to be accepted for distribution through the Smiths or Menzies network (and this can "fully national" or confined to big cities or a certain region only). This is decided by head office.

In practice, most publishers go to Smiths as the crucial company because Menzies almost automatically take magazines if Smiths do. Once accepted, the magazine is available for stocking in any of the retail outlets covered by the policy. Some titles are given promotion, with managers urged to stock big selling titles. There is also a "Newstream" system in Smiths for current affairs magazines.



**c. Who chooses which titles are sold in each shop?**

It is important to remember that the shop manager decides which titles to order for his (rarely her) shop.

**d. Do the staff on the tills bear any responsibility?**

This business is very discriminatory: there are a lot of low paid staff, usually women, on the tills, but they do not decide what is stocked. Virtually all the decision makers are men, often of a certain macho mentality. Hence the bias in many of these shops towards gun and weapons magazines, men's hobbies and, of course, pornography.

**e. Who should you complain to?**

The shop manager decides which titles are stocked in the shop so this is the person to whom you should make your objections known. Ask to see the manager in person and address any correspondence to them.

**f. Making a complaint:**

Dont hesitate to complain: it's by far the best way of tackling the display of pornographic materials. You can pick up one or more magazines, take them to the cash desk and ask to see the manager ( the shop might empty suddenly when people see what's in front of the till, but that's the shop's problem, not yours). It is important to talk to the person who takes the decisions. It's not usually the responsibility of the person serving in the shop.

You can complain about stuff not being kept on the top shelf, about displays which offend you, or the effect of it on women/men in the shop. It's well known in the trade that a lot of customers are embarrassed by it and it's presence reduces the freedom with which people move around the shop - so dont let them pretend they don't know what you are talking about! Threaten to take your custom elsewhere, to write to the local press, to go to regional or national office. You don't have to go into the shop alone: find people to go with you. Or you can always telephone and ask for the manager - or get the name and write a letter.

One further thing to remember: these chains have an automatic cut-off for magazines selling less than a certain minimum (eg: 10 or 20 per week/month). If a porn mag gets lost somewhere in the shop without its cover showing, so no-one can find it, it might fall foul of this arrangement and be dropped from the order. It is not illegal to move magazines around the shop.

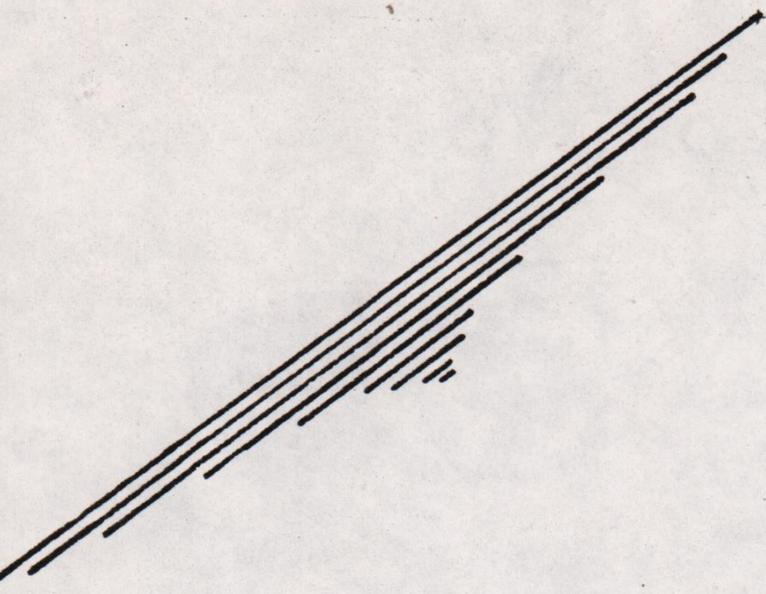
**g. Taking your protest to the top:**

If you are dissatisfied with the response you get, then it is time to go higher! You can get the name of the regional manager from the shop staff, or look up the office in the phone book, and write to/phone them.

Beyond that there is the national Head office (see address list).



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For local newsagents, video shops and corner shops most of the above advice is relevant.

Remember always to ask for or write to the shop manager: go to the person who has responsibility for the decisions.

Find out if the shop is part of a chain - if so you can find out the regional and national office address and number.

write to the journalist whose name should appear with the item or as part of a list of correspondents.

A letter to editor for the letters page will let more people know what your objections are and may encourage others to voice their opinions.

The letter should be short and to the point, 150-200 words is about right. Think carefully exactly what it is you want to say and what it is about the item that you liked or didn't like. Keep the letter relevant to the article in question. Remember to ask for a reply.

Send the letter off first class, speed is very important.

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# newspapers & magazines.

**b. General comment:**  
If you want to say something about a paper or magazine's general attitude eg their coverage of a particular issue (or lack of it) or their advertising policy, then write directly to the editor.

**a. Reacting to an article:**  
If you see something in a paper or magazine to which you wish respond then the best way to do this is to send a letter to the editor. With newspapers you should do this the same day as the item appears in the paper. If you don't then it will quickly be out of date. You can also



If you want to complain about (or praise) a programme or item there are several avenues open:

# T.V.

# &

## a. Telephoning

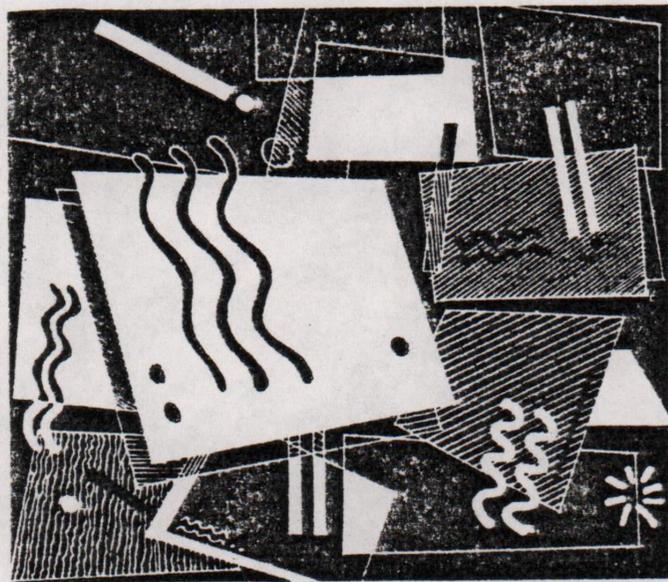
As soon as you have seen an item on TV which you object to because you feel that it is biased, unjust or inaccurate you should telephone the Duty Officer for the TV station concerned. (Get the number of the TV station from the phone book.) Your call gets logged and passed on the next day to the Head of Department and the Producer of the programme

## b. Writing

Write to the top. This is the best way of ensuring that everyone who should know, gets to know and shows you mean business.

Be factual and polite - otherwise it is all too easy for them to label you as "outraged of Tunbridge Wells"! Invite a reply in a courteous way, say how disappointed you are, remind them of the high standards of their broadcasting etc.

**ITV:** There are twelve ITV companies in the UK, currently transmitting on Channel 3. They all have a Controller of Programmes (variously called Director of programmes, Programme controller etc). This is the person to write to.



**CHANNEL 4:** Channel 4 only makes one programme. This is called "Right to Reply". They are always keen to hear from viewers who disagree with the way subjects have been covered. You can contact them at Channel 4. All other Channel 4 programmes are commissioned or bought in from distributors. Channel 4 news is made by ITN. With any complaint about a programme broadcast on Channel four write to the Chair or the Director. Ask them to pass it to the Senior Commissioning Editor.

Channel 4 is a wholly owned subsidiary of the IBA and is charged by parliament to cater for tastes and interests not served, or under represented, elsewhere on TV; to innovate in the form and content of programmes; and to devote a large proportion of its airtime to educational programming. It has a special commitment to the ethnic minorities in Britain. It may be worth mentioning Channel 4's remit in your letter, if appropriate

# RADIO.

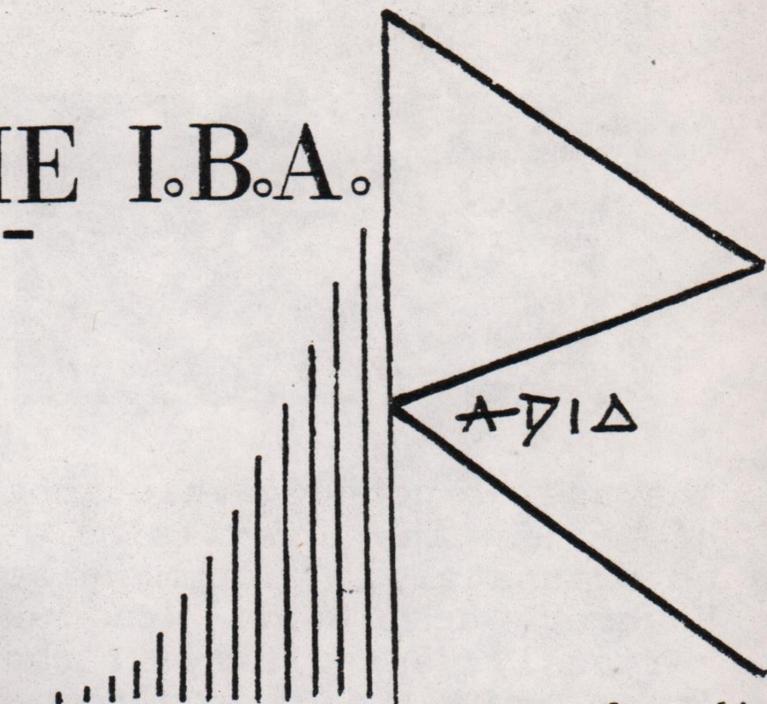
**THE I.B.A.:** The IBA (Independent Broadcasting Authority) supervises all programmes transmitted on ITV and Channel 4. The Broadcasting Act requires the IBA to ensure that programmes provide a proper balance of information, education and entertainment; a high general standard in all respects; and accuracy in News, due impartiality in matters of political and industrial controversy, and the avoidance of offence to good taste and decency. Every ITV company and Channel 4 must observe the provisions of the Broadcasting Act and the IBA requirements which stem from them.

To complain about a programme on ITV and Channel 4 write to the chairman of the IBA, George Russel, at the address below, citing the appropriate phrase from the list above. He will usually ask the TV company or Channel 4 to comment before he replies. No programme maker welcomes questions from the IBA! So it is worth doing.

**BBC TELEVISION:** As with ITV and Channel 4 any serious complaint is best sent to the top. In the BBC this means the Director General. The same system operates - in order to answer your letter, they will have to refer to the producer, via their Head of Department. (yes, it is like the Civil Service). The information then gets passed back up the system. That way everyone gets to know what you are objecting to. Always ask for a reply.

## THE I.B.A.

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**RADIO:** The structure of radio stations and networks is similar to that of television. As usual, write to the top. On a local radio station this means the Managing Director of the Station. In the BBC this means the station Controller; in Independent radio it varies between the Station Director and the relevant Head of department. Remember the producer of the programme will see your letter anyway, so you don't need to write two letters.

As with other letters, be factual, polite, express disappointment, remind them of the high standards of their broadcasting and make sure to ask for a reply.

**c. Access programmes.** There are quite a few access programmes on T.V. and a few on radio. Channel Four's Right to Reply have video boxes around the place which you can go to to tape your complaint.

**d. Broadcasting Standards Council.**

BSC are the watchdog body set up to monitor all broadcasting. Their draft code of practice expresses specific concern about images which stereotype women and the portrayal of violence, including sexual violence, against women.

Write to The director (see address list).

THE

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B.B.C.





# LOCAL

## Local Authorities and "private" shops:

Local authorities have the power to grant and to withdraw or refuse to grant licences for "private" shops. (i.e. porn shops). Every shop of this kind has to apply for licence in order to trade. In several places councils have been successfully lobbied and have withdrawn or refused applications because of public pressure. If there is a porn shop in your area, the first thing is to find out whether they have a license to trade. If they do, then you can protest to your local authority. (If they haven't then you can inform the police.) Once a licence has been granted it comes up for renewal regularly. This means that the council discusses whether or not to grant the licence and make the decision to renew or not. You could find out when this is happening and try and organise for it.

- a) encourage or incite any person to commit a criminal offence
- b) cause grave or widespread offence by reason of their violent or sexual content.
- c) debase, degrade or demean.
- d) induce an unacceptable sense of fear or anxiety
- e) mislead any person with respect to the content, or cost of the service being offered.

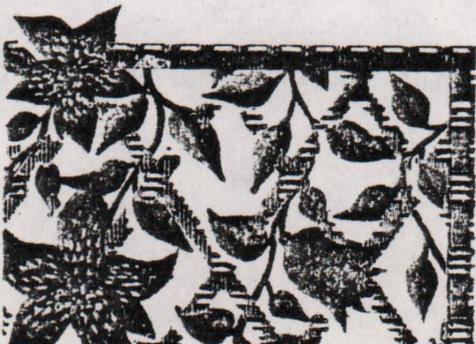
Many pornographic "chatline" services could be said to offend and breach the code in any or all of the above ways. The existence of these services and the advertisement of them is a cause of grave distress and concern to many people, however there is something you can do:

### d. What you can do:

You can complain either by telephone or in writing. There is a free complaints line which operates 24 hours per day. (See address list)

Due to the large number of these services it is important that you provide as much information as you possibly can in your complaint. You should include where possible:

- 1) The service providers name
- 2) The name and telephone number of the service
- 3) The date and time that the complainant listened to the service in question
- 4) Or when relating to promotional material i.e. adverts, you should send a copy and details of where you saw the advert and on what date.



There are several ways of bringing a complaint to your local authority:



### a. Councillor's surgeries:

Your councillor for your ward should hold regular surgeries, when people who they represent (anyone in their ward) can go and see them. You can find out the details of when and where this happens from the council, public libraries or Citizen Advice Bureaus. It is always worth it to go and talk to them in person about your concerns. They can give you information, eg: about the council's policy (if it has one). You can ask them to do things, eg: bring something up at a council meeting. Ask as many questions as you want to and don't be afraid to demand action. They are there to represent your interests.

GOVERNMENT.

# YOUR M.P.

## b. Women's Units or Equal Opportunities Units:

Your council may have a Women's committee and/or and Equal Opportunities committee. If they have get in touch with them and draw their attention to the object of your complaint. They, as representatives of women in the borough, should definitely be prepared to take up the issue of pornography and its availability in the area. You can contact them through the council. To find out who to contact on your council about women's issues who might be sympathetic contact The National Association of Local government Women's Committees (see Address List).



Your local M.P. is accountable to you as a constituent. S/He should be willing to listen to your concerns and take up issues which effect her/his constituents.

### a. Write a letter:

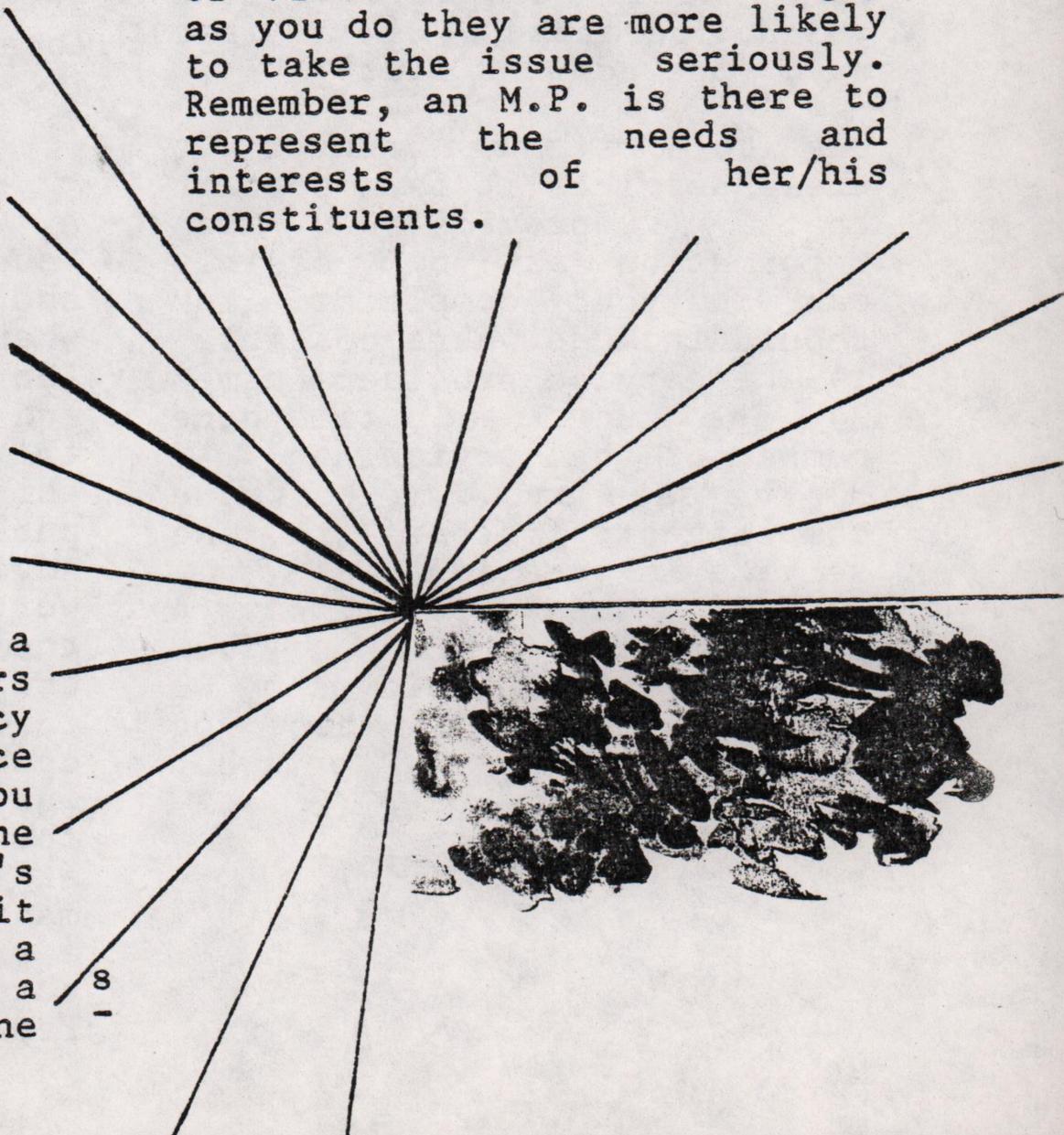
It is worth writing. Make sure you ask for a reply as then they are obliged to write back. Send a copy of any response you get to the CAP office. Write to them at the House of Commons (see Address List).

### b. M.P.'s surgeries:

M.P.s also hold regular local surgeries. Again it is definitely good to meet them in person and express your concern. If you can present them with evidence that many constituents share your point of view and feel as strongly as you do they are more likely to take the issue seriously. Remember, an M.P. is there to represent the needs and interests of her/his constituents.

## c. Chair of the council:

Some local authorities have a specific policy which covers pornography and/or policy about sexism, sexual violence or sex discrimination. You could find this out from the information department/Women's Unit/Equal Opportunities Unit of the council. If they have a policy about it then address a complaint to The Chair of the Council.



# SOME ADVICE.

## a. Be assertive

You have every right to complain about something which offends you: you are not being unreasonable.

## b. Be Precise

Always think about what you want to say before you start. Be as specific as you can. Try to state exactly what it is that has angered (or pleased) you, why you have decided to say something or write and what you want the person you are addressing to do about it. This is very important as it will make it difficult for people to dismiss you or fob you off.

## c. Be personal

Always express your own views and feelings ... other people may not feel the same as you!

## d. Polite

Try to be!

## e. Keep at it

Be persistent. Make sure that whoever you are addressing lets you say your piece. If people get aggressive with you or try and brush you off as irrelevant, try not to let them rattle you. Continue to make your statement calmly. This is more effective than getting upset and if you persist eventually they will have to listen to you. When phoning, keep trying if a number is engaged the first time.



## f. Do it straight away

As far as is physically possible, do it now. You may feel differently about it tomorrow or have lost your nerve.

## g. Go to the top

When writing it is usually best to go to the top. (With shops this means the shop manager, area manager or head office; with broadcasting this means the director of the channel or radio station.) This is the best way of ensuring that everyone who should know, gets to know and shows that you mean business. Always ask for a reply.

## h. Include all the information

Make sure that you include all the relevant information in any complaint. For instance, if you are complaining about a programme on TV make sure you have the name of the programme, the date and time it went out and that you are writing/phoning the right station.

## i. Keep to the point

Any complaint, but especially letters, should be short and to the point. Think carefully first about exactly what you want to say and keep your remarks relevant to the subject in question (avoid general political diatribes! )

# USEFUL

## 1. Newsagents

**W.H. Smiths Ltd,**  
7 Holbein Place,  
London. SW1.  
tel: 01 730 1200.

**John Menzies Ltd,**  
Hanover Buildings,  
Rose Street,  
Edinburgh.  
EH2 2YQ.  
tel: 031 225 8555.

## 2. T.V. & Radio

### **Regional Stations:**

The address and phone number of regional stations are in the phone book.

### **ITV Companies:**

There are twelve ITV companies - Thames television; ITN; Border TV; Central; T.V. AM; LWT; Granada Television; Yorkshire Television; Anglia Television; Tyne Tees Television; Ulster Television; Scottish Television; - all addresses and phone numbers are available in the phone book.

### **Channel 4 Television:**

60 Charlotte Street,  
London. W1P 2AX.  
tel: 01 631 444

### **Directors:**

Sir Richard Attenborough CBE (Chairman); Michael Grade (Chief Executive); Liz Forgan (Director of Programmes.)

### **BBC :**

BBC Headquarters,  
Broadcasting House,  
London. W1 1AA.  
tel: 01 580 4468.

### **Directors:**

Marmaduke Hussey (Chairman of the Board of Governors); Michael Checkland (Director general); John Birt (Deputy Director General).

## 3. Watchdog bodies:

### **IBA:**

George Russell CBE  
Chairman  
IBA,  
70 Brompton Rd,  
London. SW3 1EY.  
tel: 01 584 7011.

### **BSC:**

The Director,  
Broadcasting Standards  
Council,  
5-8 The Sanctuary,  
London. Sw1P 3JS.

### **ASA:**

Advertising Standards  
Authority,  
Brooke House,  
2-16 Torrington Place,  
London. WC1E 7HN.  
tel: 01 580 5555.

### **ICSTIS:**

The Secretariat,  
ICSTIS,  
67-69 Whitfield Street,  
London. W1P 5RL.  
tel: 0800 500 212. (calls are free.)

## 4. Local Government

### **National Association of Local government Women's Committees:**

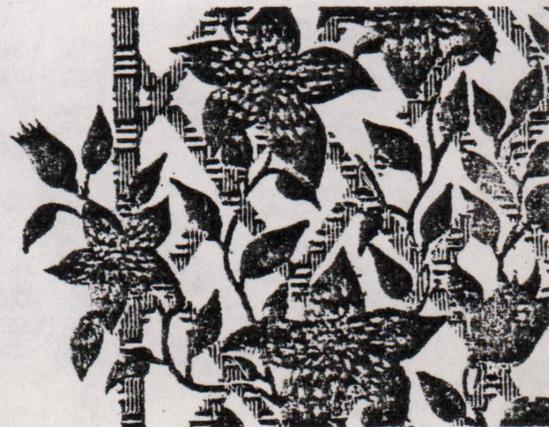
National Association of Local Govt Women's Committees,  
c/o The Pankhurst Centre,  
60-62 Nelson Street,  
Chorlton-onMedlock,  
Manchester.  
M13 9WP.  
tel: 061-274-3684.

## 5. M.P.s

### **House of Commons:**

Any M.P.,  
House of Commons,  
London SW1A 0AA.  
tel: 01 219 3000.

# ADDRESSES.



# setting up a local C.A.P. GROUP.



## SOME GUIDELINES

If you have joined CAP and want to set up a CAP group in your area then we hope these guidelines will offer you some basic help and advice. They are not instructions, just a checklist of points for you to consider. The prospect of setting up a group from scratch can seem very intimidating, but with the aid of good advice and a bit of planning anyone can do it!



Start  
up  
a  
group

### a) If it's only you.

If you have joined CAP and would like to start up a group but you don't know of anyone else in your area who is in CAP or would be interested, then here are a few suggestions for getting started:

\* **Contact CAP national** at the office address and we will be happy to put you in touch with any subscribers or subscribing organisations in your area.

\* **Get in touch with local organisations** which you think might be sympathetic, or to which you think other people who might be interested might belong. For example, any women's organisations or voluntary groups, trade unions, or community groups. (If your local authority has an equal opportunities unit or a women's unit, they can be a good source of information and contacts.)

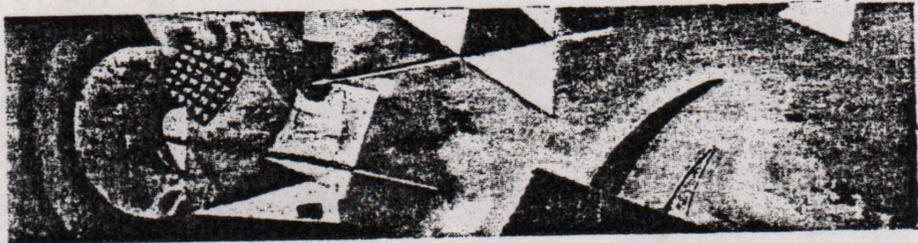
\* **Put up notices about CAP** asking interested people to contact you in your public library/ community centre/ women's centre/ workplace/ local bookshop etc.

\* **Write to your local paper(s).** Explain why you think a CAP group is needed, and offer yourself as a contact person.

\* **If you can afford to, put an advert in your local paper(s),** asking other people to contact you.

We would advise you to think carefully about using and displaying your own phone number as a contact point and about giving your home address. Remember that not everyone will welcome a campaign against pornography, and you may find some people are hostile to the suggestion.

REMEMBER - THERE ARE BOUND TO BE OTHER PEOPLE "OUT THERE" WHO FEEL AS STRONGLY AS YOURSELF AND WHO WILL WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN A CAP GROUP - IT IS JUST A MATTER OF REACHING THEM.



b) Once there are a few of you.

Once you are in touch with other people who want to form a CAP group as well you can start to get organised. How to proceed is up to you of course, but here are a few suggestions:

\* Plan your first CAP meeting. You could hold a planning meeting to do this. Get together and discuss how to arrange the first meeting. You'll need to consider how and where to publicise the group so as to encourage as many people as possible to come along.

\* Choose a venue for your first group meeting that is as accessible as possible. Try to find somewhere that is fully accessible for disabled people, or at least partially accessible if you can't find anywhere fully accessible. Choose somewhere that is well known locally, easy to find, and that everyone will feel comfortable attending.

\* Publicise your first group meeting as widely as possible. Put posters/notices in as many public places as possible e.g.: women's centre's or meeting places/ social venues; community centres; student unions; public libraries; bookshops/cafes/restaurants, etc; any local "What's on" guides. Make sure that you include information about disabled access and childcare facilities in all your publicity.

\* Draw up a list of all local organisations/groups that you think may be interested in CAP and contact them to inform all their members that the meeting is happening, and invite them to send along a representative.

\* GIVE YOURSELVES PLENTY OF TIME - PLAN AHEAD AND INFORM PEOPLE WELL IN ADVANCE. People will need adequate notice in order to attend.

# YOUR 1st meeting.

Obviously, what exactly happens at a first meeting of CAP group will depend on who comes and what the group decides. But you might find it useful to have some items ready that you can suggest for discussion. If you can agree on a draft agenda at the meeting for discussion then you can ensure that the meeting has some structure and that, hopefully, you can come out of it with certain things decided. Often it helps if you choose someone to chair the meeting, especially if a lot of people come.

## a) GETTING STARTED

There are certain basic things that you will need to discuss if the group is going to function, eg - How often do you think you should meet at first and where - It helps with advertising and to maintain involvement to have regular meeting time(s) and venue(s)

## b) FORMING THE GROUP

It is important that you discuss the kind of group you want at this meeting and the way it should operate. If you decide you want to be a CAP group, and part of CAP, then contact the CAP office for a model constitution.

There is no reason why your group has to organise in a traditional hierarchical way, but you will need to sort out how the secretarial (correspondence and administration) and financial (keeping accounts) responsibilities are to be shared. You might want to nominate certain people to do certain jobs eg publicity, treasurer, secretary. If you do, remember that everyone in the group should be involved, and that it is not fair to leave the responsibility for running the group to those people.

## c) SORTING OUT FUNDING

\* Open a bank account as soon as possible, and decide on 2/3/4/ people who can act as signatories (sign the cheques).

\* Discuss how you are going to fund the group. The more ideas you have, the better! Here are a few suggestions:

i) Charge for membership. Decide on a membership fee.

ii) As general rule of thumb, whatever activity you're doing always hold a collection, shake a bucket, ask for donations to cover your costs and fund future events.

iii) When petitioning or leafleting ask for donations.

iv) Organise stalls at local events eg fetes or festivals. This will also give you local profile.

v) Write letters appealing for financial support and asking for affiliations to any local organisations you think may be sympathetic (eg: trade unions, women's groups, community groups, your local authority - see if you can apply for any grants).

vi) Organise events to raise money, eg: jumble sales, coffee mornings, busking, street theatre, raffles, sponsored whatevers - the possibilities are endless! This will take some time and resources to arrange but can be a very successful source of funds. Good for local profile. At events remember to sign people up to join.

vii) Organise a benefit. Again this will take a lot of planning and effort. Good local profile can be achieved. You will need to put money into publicity.

viii) Hold a regular stall in your local town centre. Give out leaflets, advertise your meetings, invite people to join, do some petitioning and shake a bucket. You might want to do this outside a shop that stocks pornography. Pick a time when there are lots of people about.

ix) Sell badges, stickers, T-shirts, books etc. This will need planning and you will have to put money in first. Once you have some materials you can sell them on stalls, at events, anywhere! Make sure you charge enough so that you make some profit! CAP produces a range of campaign materials which you can order.

Remember fundraising works best when combined with awareness raising and campaigning.

\* Funding should be the responsibility of the whole group, not left to one or two people.





d) PUBLICITY

You will need to consider how to publicise future meetings/events. Your publicity is very important as this is the way people are likely to hear of the group - first impressions matter!

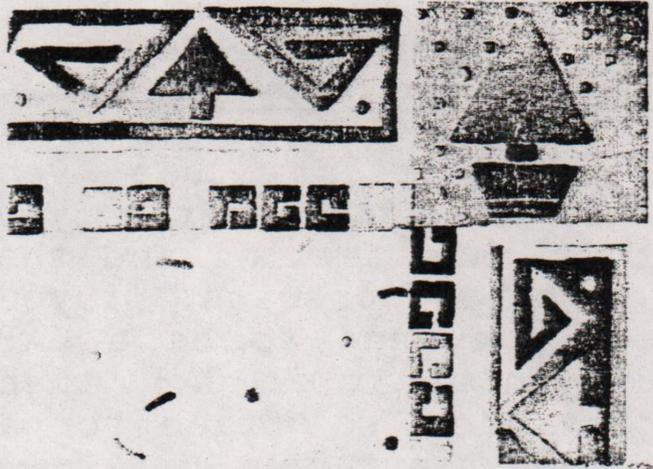
\* How successful was your publicity this time?

\* Have you reached all possible sources?

Don't get too worried about the particular design of leaflets and posters. As long as it is neat and clear. A good poster is simple, eye-catching (brightly coloured paper can achieve this), clearly shows all the information, especially time and date and venue. If you want to use pictures, then use positive ones. Take some photographs of your group doing something and use them. We don't recommend you to use pornography. Think about whether you want to decide on a logo or a set poster design (this helps people to clearly recognise your group).

e) WHAT KIND OF GROUP DO YOU WANT?

It is worth giving some time to discussing what kind of group people would like/expect. CAP nationally is initiating certain campaigns which as a CAP group you would hopefully want to get involved in. But your group isn't just about campaigning - it should also be a source of valuable support for all of you. You may also want to make time to hold discussions about certain issues, either for the benefit of group members, to help you clarify together your own ideas, or as public events to raise awareness. You may also want to organise social events.



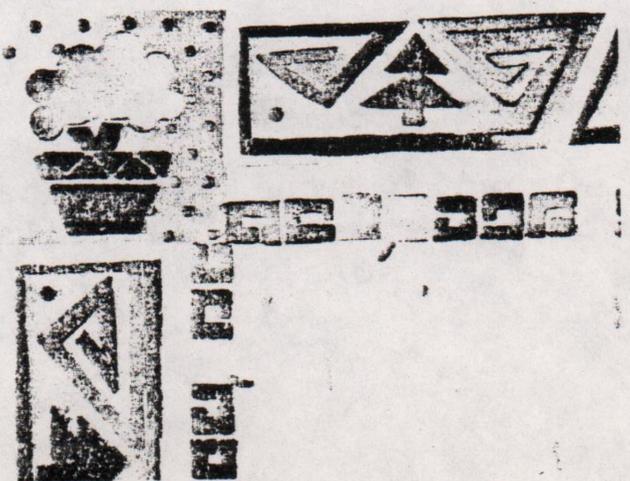
\* Do not always try and have "heavy" theoretical meetings, or always be "out there" campaigning. Try and balance activities so that there is a lot of variety and something for everyone to get involved in. Don't demand too much of yourselves, and don't take on too much all at once - set yourselves achievable goals.

f) WOMEN AND THE GROUP

You will need to decide whether you wish the meetings of the group to be just for women, or whether you want a women's section of the group which can hold separate meetings sometimes, or whether some of the meetings will be for women only and some mixed.

If you decide that all group meetings should be mixed, be aware that at times women in the group will want, and require, space to meet together. Many may even want to hold their own meetings or form a women's section of the group.

The group should organise itself to encourage the full participation of as many women as possible. This means being responsive to women's needs and demands and allowing women the space to organise as women if they want to.





g) MAKING THE GROUP ACCESSIBLE

In order to enable as many people as possible to participate in the group, you will need to consider how to organise in ways that do not exclude people.

\* Consider the timings of meetings. This effects many people, particularly women with children. Consider varying the times if you cannot find a suitable one.

\* Give the maximum amount of notice. Most people cannot change their plans at a few days notice to attend a meeting or an event. By making sure you put out publicity plenty of time in advance, you give more people the opportunity to choose to come.

\* Hold regular meetings but not too often. A regular time and day means that people can plan to attend a meeting in advance. Most people do not have a lot of spare time to devote to a new group. Don't expect too much from people eg Don't have 4 meetings a week. Pick a regular time eg once a month or once a fortnight.

\* Organise childcare provision. This could entail either organising a creche or providing childcare expenses (ideally, both!). Remember that proper childcare requires financial commitment from the group. Make sure you include information as to the provision offered in all your publicity.

\* Consider organising safe transport home if you are meeting in the evenings.

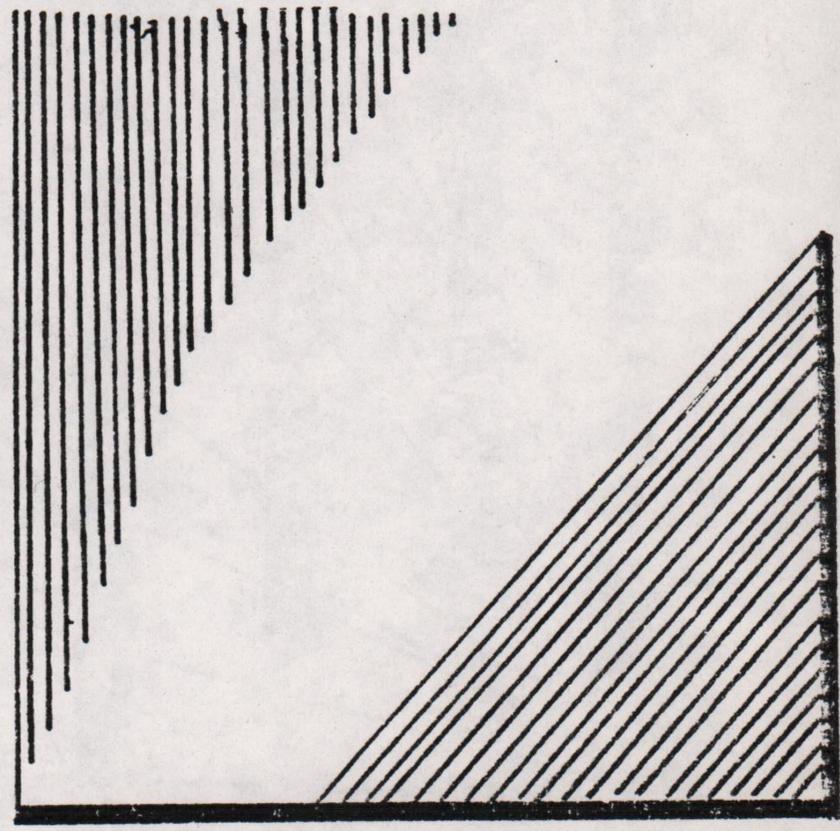
\* Choose a venue that is accessible to disabled people. Make sure you include details of the exact nature of the access available in all your publicity. Consider providing a signer for your meetings.



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Let other groups in your area know that you exist as soon as possible. In particular, get in touch with any group concerned with women's or children's rights, sexual violence, sexual abuse, violence against women or related issues. (eg: Women's Aid, Any groups for survivors of sexual abuse, Rape Crisis, WAVAW). Also contact your local council's women's committee or equal opps committee and get them to put you on their mailing list.

It is important to do this because you can offer each other valuable support, share information, and maybe organise joint events in the future.



i) YOU AND CAP NATIONAL

\* While the group is forming keep in touch with CAP - we may be able to help with contacts, ideas or resources.

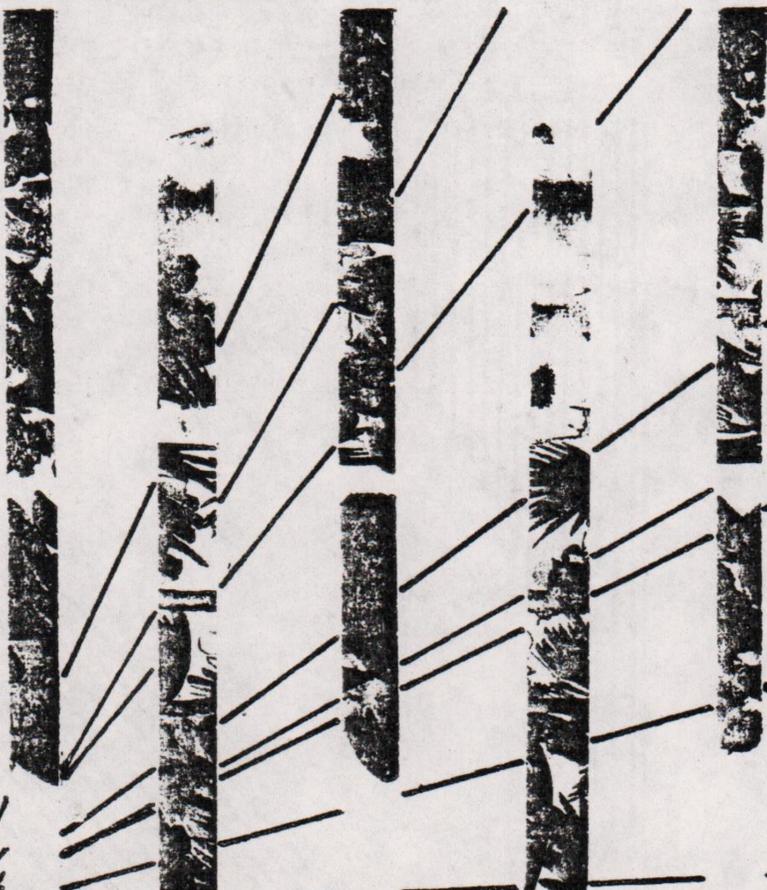
\* Once the group is formed, inform CAP immediately. Phone or write to the office. If you are a CAP group, send us a copy of your constitution, together with your affiliation. If you are not part of CAP send us your subscription. This means you can keep in touch with the national campaign via the newsletter and campaign bulletins.

\* Let CAP know what the group is doing/planning to do, and of any responses you get from the community/media/local authority/M.P. etc. This enables us to keep track of what is happening, offer you any support you require and measure the growth/success of the campaign across the UK and regionally.

N.B.: CAP retains the right to refuse use of its name to a group if the groups constitution conflicts with the basic aims, objectives and principles of the national Campaign Against Pornography.

j) BE IMAGINATIVE!

Don't be afraid to initiate your own ideas and try out new methods of organising and campaigning. Let CAP national know how you get on and which ideas were particularly successful. That way we can pass the information on to others via the newsletter.



k) KEEP IN TOUCH!

It's important for both your group and the national campaign that we keep in contact. Remember that the CAP newsletter is there for you to use to exchange information and ideas and keep up to date with what's happening all over the UK. So use it!

# WINNING THE ARGUMENTS.

CAP's priorities are action and campaigning: we aim to involve as many people as possible in anti-pornography action while exposing the damage pornography does. We want to make the voice of women public and expose the dimensions of the problem. This means equipping women with what they need to have and win the arguments themselves. It is an enabling process and an empowering one.

Campaigning against pornography involves talking to people about the issues, so it is useful to have an awareness of reactions that you are likely to encounter. There are certain recurring arguments that always come up. Sometimes they come from people who really just want to clarify their own thoughts on specific issues; often they come from people who want to disrupt a meeting, block any debate, undermine your confidence or for any number of reasons.

Whatever the reason, it is very useful to be familiar with the sort of arguments that you are likely to have to deal with, and the purpose of this section is to identify some of them and to suggest counter-arguments. We do not advocate any particular hard and fast 'line', but the ideas we have put forward represent thoughts that women at CAP have developed.

We hope that you will find the following points useful, but they are only guidelines and suggestions. You may feel that you want to develop or alter them in your own way



# DEFINING



One of the smokescreens used to stifle any discussion around pornography is the obsessive insistence that we define pornography before we can discuss it.

We all know what we are talking about so try not to get too bogged down in formulating a definition. However, you may find it useful to have a couple at your fingertips.

a) Women organising in UK in association with Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom have drafted a legal definition as follows:

"Pornographic material means film and video and any printed matter which, for the purpose of sexual arousal or titillation, depicts women, or parts of women's bodies, as objects, things or commodities, or in sexually humiliating or degrading poses or being subjected to violence"

b) Women organising against pornography in US understand pornography as "a systematic practice of exploitation and subordination that differentially harms women", and define it for the purposes of law as follows:

"1. Pornography is the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women through pictures and/or words that also includes one or more of following:

- (i) women are presented dehumanized as sexual objects, things, or commodities: or
- (ii) women are presented as sexual objects who enjoy pain or humiliation: or
- (iii) women are presented as sexual objects who experience sexual pleasure in being raped: or
- (iv) women are presented as sexual objects tied up or cut up or mutilated or bruised or physically hurt: or
- (v) women are presented in postures or positions of sexual submission, servility, or display: or
- (vi) women's body parts - including but not limited to vaginas, breasts or buttocks - are exhibited such that women are reduced to those parts: or
- (vii) women are presented as whores by nature: or
- (viii) women are presented being penetrated by objects or animals: or
- (ix) women are presented in scenarios of degradation, injury, torture, shown as filthy or inferior, bleeding, bruised, or hurt in a context that makes these conditions sexual."

c) It is also useful to know the origin of the word.

'Pornography' is a combination of the two ancient Greek words 'pornea' and 'graphos' (pornography is very old!). 'Pornea' was the name given to a particular group of prostituted slave women. Slaves represented the lowest class in Greek society, within this class women underwent further subordination, hence

# PORNOGRAPHY



pornea were the lowest, most despised group within the Greek 'democratic' state. They had no status, no names and no rights. They were kept in cages like animals.

'Graphos' means graphic depiction.

Thus, the literal definition of pornography is the graphic depiction of whores.

It is useful to know this because it demonstrates:

(i) that inequality and female subordination have always been intrinsic to pornography

(ii) it is gender specific: pornography is about a particular representation of women

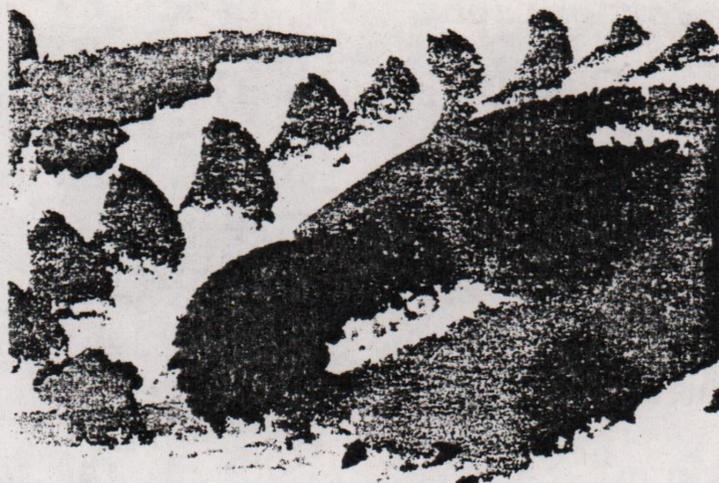
(iii) this definition demonstrates that pornography has always existed - the representation of women as subordinated, sexually available objects goes beyond any particular social structure e.g. capitalism.

# ~~~~~ "Pornography Performs a Positive social function!"

There are many variations on this theme. We have identified four of the most common ones. They all justify and excuse pornography in essentially the same way.

(a) "Pornography is sex education"

This depends upon what you mean by sex education! If you think sex education is about domination, control, conquest of women by men then yes, pornography is sex education.



If on the other hand you believe that sex education should consist of frank and open discussion, information and support, alongside space for self discovery, then pornography is nothing of the kind.

Images which degrade women and distort sexuality can only be damaging to healthy sexual development.

(b) "Pornography is an outlet for people with no other means of sexual expression or relief"

This is misinformed on two counts:

Firstly, because "people who have no other means of sexual expression or relief" usually means people with disabilities and occasionally means lesbians and gay men. In either case the implication is that these people are not in control of their 'abnormal' sexuality - it suggests in a very patronising way that they 'need' pornography because they have no 'normal' means of sexual expression.

Secondly, because it presumes that (male) sexual urges are uncontrollable and need "expression or relief". This myth is often used to justify or excuse many forms of sexual violence, and denies the fact that men, like everyone else, have control over or bear any responsibility for, their actions. There is absolutely no reason to suppose that men have any less control over their sexual drives than women do.

(c) // Pornography is used by couples (i.e. it is useful to women as well as to men) //

In actual fact it is men, and not "people" who produce and consume the vast majority of pornographic material. Women do not tend to be independent consumers of pornography.

We know that many women are forced to participate in the use of pornography by their male partners.

There is enormous pressure on women in society to accept, tolerate and express approval/understanding for pornography.

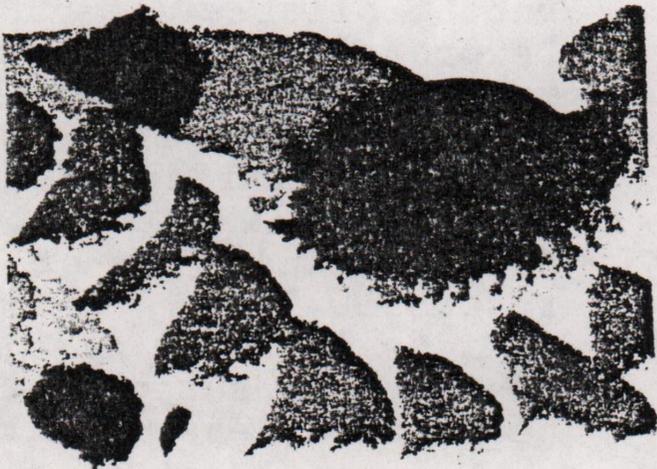
It is often the case that women experience no support which enables them to express any objections they might have to pornography.

The idea that women make a free choice to use pornography needs to be carefully questioned and re-examined.

(d) // Pornography provides a substitute for men who would otherwise commit sexual violence //

All the evidence points to the fact that pornography reinforces and encourages men's hatred, contempt and hostility towards women, rather than containing it.

It's effect is to encourage men to commit acts of sexual violence and increase the threat to women rather than protect them.



The wider question that we should ask is, if pornography "protects" women, (which it doesn't) which women benefit from this "protection"? Women involved in pornography production are raped, beaten, abused and degraded and sometimes even killed. What protection does pornography offer these women? Is their abuse acceptable in order that "decent" women may be protected?

# // Pornography is harmless. //

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This is a very common myth about pornography. There is absolutely no evidence to support it.

The production of pornography involves and requires the rape and abuse of the women and children used to make it.

- all child pornography is the permanent record of the sexual abuse of the children involved, and everytime the pornography is used, further abuse is taking place.

- huge numbers of adult women involved in the production of pornography were first used as children and teenagers.

- the making of 'violent' pornography (pornography which contains depictions of crimes of violence) often is the record of real brutality to real women. A witness to the U.S. Commission on pornography in 1986 testified how women and girls were tortured and suffered permanent injuries to answer publisher demands for photographs showing sado-masochistic abuse. "Snuff" movies (films of real women being murdered) exist.

- the production of 'non-violent' or 'soft' pornography also involves sexual abuse and sexual violence. A famous case is that of Linda Marchiano who appeared in "Deep Throat", the most financially successful single pornographic film ever made. We know from her testimony and her two books ("Ordeal" and "Out of Bondage") that this film is in fact a documentary of her sexual abuse while being kept prisoner under threat of her own and her family's life should she attempt to escape or refuse to comply. Despite the huge profits made from this film, she received absolutely nothing.

- women are assaulted and abused as pornography is made. At a recent rally a woman testified in public that she had been raped by the man she was living with while the rape was filmed by somebody that the woman regarded as a friend. She did not know what they had done with that film.

**Pornography promotes, legitimises, encourages and sanctions sexual violence.**

- there is more correlative evidence to link pornography with sexual violence than there is to link smoking with cancer (where is the Government health warning on page 3?).

- professionals working with sexual offenders have testified that these men have a history of using pornography; that they have a warped conception of women consistent with the representation of women in pornography; that their use of pornography is extremely reinforcing of their desires to commit crimes of sexual violence; that they use pornography as a source of new ideas: that pornography is to them the permission, direction and rehearsal for acts of sexual violence.

**The display of pornography is a pervasive form of sexual harassment.**

- it is as damaging and seriously undermining as other forms of sexual harassment.

- the display of pornography in the workplace undermines the status of women as workers and can create an intimidating and hostile working environment.

- women find the display of pornography threatening.

- young girls and women grow up surrounded by pornographic images which have a dramatic effect on their perception of themselves. They learn to see themselves as sexual objects, never in possession or control of their own bodies.



**//WOMEN IN THE PORNOGRAPHY INDUSTRY ENJOY WHAT THEY DO//**

Women have no control over the pornography industry. They enjoy no protection, trade union representation, support networks, or job security. They are a grossly exploited workforce. In addition, women are injured, mutilated, raped, abused and sometimes killed in order that pornography may be produced.

Women do not make pornography because they enjoy it. They do it because they have no alternative, because they need the money or because they are forced to, sometimes under threat of their lives.

// WOMEN IN PORNOGRAPHY MAKE MONEY BY EXPLOITING MEN'S SEXUAL NEEDS //

Most women involved in pornography do not make much money out of it. The odd one or two that do, e.g. Samantha Fox, are used conveniently to defend pornography and perpetuate the myths that it is harmless fun, that women enjoy it etc. These women are often under the control of a man in a position of power (Sam Fox was "trained" by her father from a very young age).

It is difficult to see how images of women which degrade them to the level objects of male desire and gratification can be regarded as putting women in a position of power over men.



// OPPOSITION TO PORNOGRAPHY IS REACTIONARY //

Pornography denies the civil rights of women and children: our opposition to pornography is about advocating and defending the civil rights of women and children in our society.

Many people who claim to oppose pornography are identified by the public as right wing, however it doesn't follow from that that it is rightwing to oppose pornography: many right wing people oppose murder but no one would argue anyone who objects to murder is right wing!



// WOMEN WHO OPPOSE PORNOGRAPHY ARE ..... // (fill in the blank).

Women who object to pornography get stereotyped in a variety of ways, all of them tedious and offensive.

This has combined purposes: to silence you, ridicule and dismiss your justified and radical anger, prevent you from being taken seriously and to prevent you effectively opening up any discussion.

Here are just some of the insults women encounter - the list is by no means exhaustive!:

frigid, prudish, anti sex, insensitive to the rights of minority groups, lacking a sense of humour, repressed, frustrated, unable to get a real man, man haters, jealous(!), killjoys, afraid of sex, suffering from "penis envy" etc etc etc.

Basically all these are designed to make you feel that you have a problem because you don't like/accept pornography. You are (unfortunately) more than likely to come up against these attitudes. Don't expend too much of your valuable energy on them and try not to let them undermine you.



# should there be a law against it ?



A campaign for legislation like Clare Short's "Page 3" Bill can play a tremendously positive role in focussing public attention on the issues, opening up the debate and giving women confidence to articulate their objections about pornography.

A common argument you might encounter is that we shouldn't advocate anti pornography legislation because it is/will be used against "us", minority communities like lesbians and gay men, radical writers etc .

The first point is that we have never had legislation against pornography. What we have are laws against "obscenity", mainly the the obscene publications act. The OPA depends upon a judges interpretation of what might "deprave or corrupt". This is a subjective definition. Nowhere does the law mention pornography nor is it intended or used to seriously tackle pornography distribution. The vast majority of pornography consumed - all the "top shelf" titles - is judged to be within the law. The only effect of the law (in terms of tackling pornography) is to regulate the access to different kinds of pornography.

We should initiate discussion around different strategies for tackling and eradicating pornography. We do not advocate any one particular solution. We welcome any discussion about possible legislation and the production of draft legislation which recognises pornography as a threat to women and children.

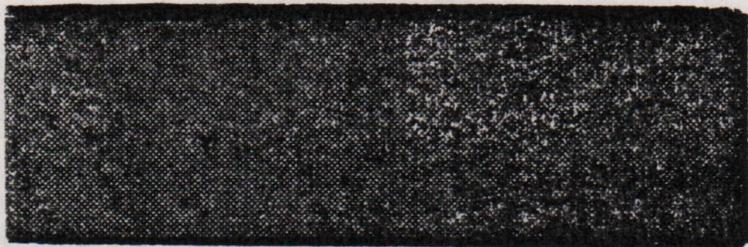


## Pornography and freedom of speech.

The argument that campaigns against pornography limit freedom of speech is still a popular one. In a society where we are all equal, where the civil rights of all people are respected and protected and where we all have equal access to the media, there would, in theory, be no need for campaigns like CAP.

Unfortunately this society does not exist! In our society it is often necessary to place constraints upon what is said and published. We must recognise that those in positions of power are able to





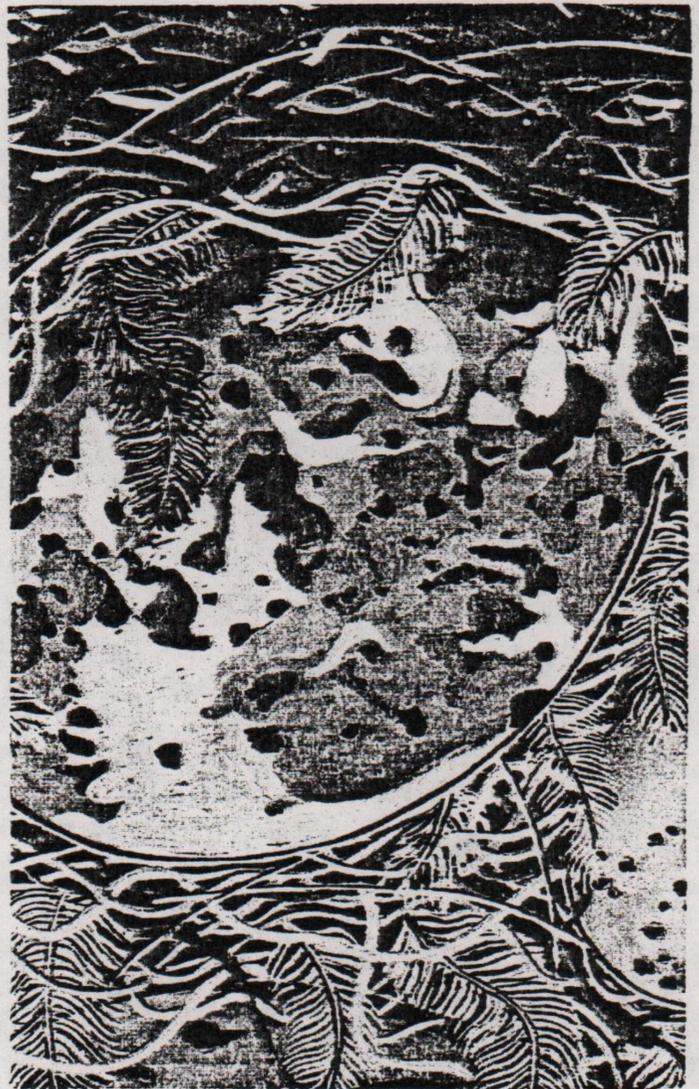
express certain things which may incite violence against others, for example libel and slander laws and the Race Relations Act show some recognition of the harm that may be caused by what is written and said.

If you do come across this argument then perhaps you should make the following points to whomever is adopting this particular line.

If there is a genuine concern with freedom of speech then maybe this concern should be extended to the fact that women who express objections to pornography are systematically having their freedom of speech restricted and their civil liberties marginalised.

The taboos surrounding sexual abuse and violence against women and children clearly demonstrate that freedom of speech is not something which is extended to everybody. It's a bit naive and liberal not to recognise this.

So long as women are expressing their objections to the harm that pornography does, then we go some way to claiming our rights and our freedom of speech (which does not depend on the violation of other's civil rights). Freedom of speech should not mean that pornographers like David Sullivan can produce, and sell whatever they like, regardless of the damage it does.



#### WHAT ABOUT EROTICA?

This is often initiated as a smoke-screen so try not to get too bogged down with this one.

It's a bit of a luxury to sit around debating the concept of erotica. We need to turn the debate around and not be defensive - we are against pornography, we are concerned with the harm it inflicts - what is your concern? What is it that you want to defend? Which images do you want to keep and why do you want to keep them?

Discussions tend to get confused because there are different understandings of the term censorship. It is important therefore to clarify exactly what we mean by the term censorship before any useful discussion can occur. There are two current definitions of censorship.

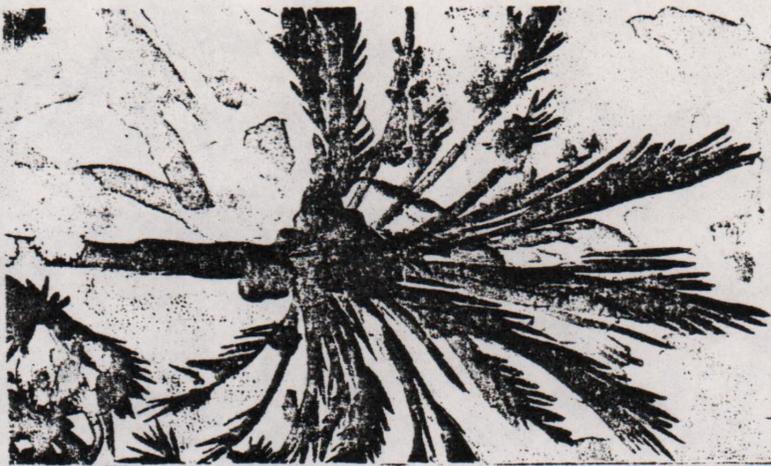
### 1. Banning things:

The most common understanding of the term censorship is that it is about banning things. This definition could be summarised as: censorship is any decision taken by any person or group to ban or withdraw or prevent the publication of any piece of material for any reason.

This is an extremely broad and loose definition. It is indiscriminate. Under it Section 28, the government ban on Sinn Fein, women taking pornography from the shelves and a union taking a democratic decision to remove and ban pornography from a particular space, would all be categorised as censorship.

Under this definition to be against censorship would be to adopt a libertarian standpoint: anyone can say, publish etc., anything they like regardless of its effect on other people.

If this is what is meant by the term censorship there are obviously strong arguments to be made for censorship in certain situations and against censorship in others. There is certainly a case to be made for censorship of pornography



because its production involves the abuse of women and of children, and it incites, sanctions, legitimises and encourages sexual violence and sexual abuse. Thus its production, consumption, sale and display constitute a violation of women's and children's civil rights.

### 2. Political control/repression of dissent:

The second definition is more specific. This understanding of censorship is that it is about the maintenance of power in favour of the censor. It is a specific practice employed for a specific political purpose, i.e. social control. This understanding of censorship could be summarised as: censorship is a practical means of social control. It is practised exclusively by a group or groups that have power over another group or groups in order to prevent that power being challenged or subverted, to repress and eradicate any critical or politically threatening alternative expression. It involves the repression and eradication of dissent and its purpose is the maintenance of power: the perpetuation or consolidation of the power inequalities that exist in favour of the censor.

This is crucial: it is about the maintenance of power - the censor always has power over the censored.

Under this more specific definition of censorship we can construct a much more useful analysis which is

# CENSORSHIP.



