

# Women of Colour Against Pornography



CAP is launching a new group, Women of Colour Against Pornography (WCAP). We hope the group will provide a forum to challenge the blatant racism of the porn industry.

WCAP would like to recruit women of colour who are angry about the way they are being presented in these 'men's magazines'. The porn industry is intrinsically racist. It seeks to reinforce and promote racist stereotypes of Black women in magazines with names like 'Hot Chocolate Babes'.

Women of colour have the

ammunition to attack the porn industry in a whole new way. In doing so we hope that the very validity of this vile trade in women's bodies will be seriously questioned.

## Taking action

We are looking for women who are interested in taking action in the form of lobbying and protests. We will also be supportive of women who want to start up their own groups outside the London area.

■ If you are interested in joining WCAP please get in touch with the CAP office.

## Erotica 94

CAP London group geared itself up for action at the end of last year following reports in the media that an erotica exhibition was to be held at Wembley. It looked like being the biggest promotion of pornography ever

### Objections

We missed the deadline for official objections so took our concerns up with Ken Livingston the local MP. He contacted porn producers Northern and Shell to ask about their involvement in the venture and was told they had been asked to back the event but had

refused! By this time the event had been postponed twice and was to be Erotica 95 to be held on February 14th.

### Cancelled

We were beginning to have our doubts about the event ever taking place and were delighted to hear from Wembley in early January that the event was not going ahead because of lack of funding. It felt really quite heartening in the midst of the multi million pound porn industry that insufficient funds could be found for such a sleazy venture.

### Suggested reading

If you feel you need to know more about the subject, here are some books you might find useful.

*Pornography and Sexual Violence - the Links - Everywoman*

*Women Against Violence Against Women - D. Rhodes, S McNeill Eds (Onlywomen)*

*Pornography - Men Possessing Women - A. Dworkin (Women's Press)*

*Pornography: Women, Violence & Civil Liberties. A Radical View. Ed Catherine Itzen (Oxford University Press)*

*Pornography and Silence - Susan Griffin (Women's Press)*

*Dear Clare.....this is what women feel about Page 3 K. Tunks, D. Hutchinson Eds (Radius)*

*Pornography and Civil Rights - A New Day for Women's Equality A. Dworkin, C. MacKinnon (Organising Against Pornography Press).*

### CAP Newsletter Editorial Policy

This Issue of the CAP Newsletter has been produced by Linda Gaskell and Wendy Cooke and designed by Sue Brown. We do not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed in every article we print. However, we are committed to a policy of not publishing anything which we consider to be racist, sexist or anti-lesbian, or anything which is informed by discriminatory views on grounds of class or disability.

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24 APR 1995  
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# CAP NEWS

Spring 1995

## Campaign Against Pornography

## Editorial

Welcome to the CAP Spring newsletter. As you will see in the newsletter we continue to be active in fighting the porn industry. We are focusing on WH Smith, one of the major porn distributors in this country, and we hope that everyone will feel able to take part in this campaign. Ideas for what you can do are on page 3.

Since the last newsletter there have been a number of changes in the membership of the CAP management committee. Unfortunately we have also had to stop employing a worker due to lack of funds. CAP would like to thank Rachel Wingfield for all the hard work she has put in while working for us. The office continues to be staffed by a small group of volunteers, so please be patient if the office takes a while to deal with any enquiries.

Funding is also the reason for the smaller newsletter this time, but as you will see from the content the campaign continues to be strong. We are planning a campaign Day where women members can come along and discuss how to take CAP forward.

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## The Truth About Porn

Three articles about pornography, by Journalist Nick Davies, appeared in the Guardian in November 1994. The articles sought to shift the focus away from controversy about the effects of porn on its consumers, to the damage inflicted on those involved in its production.

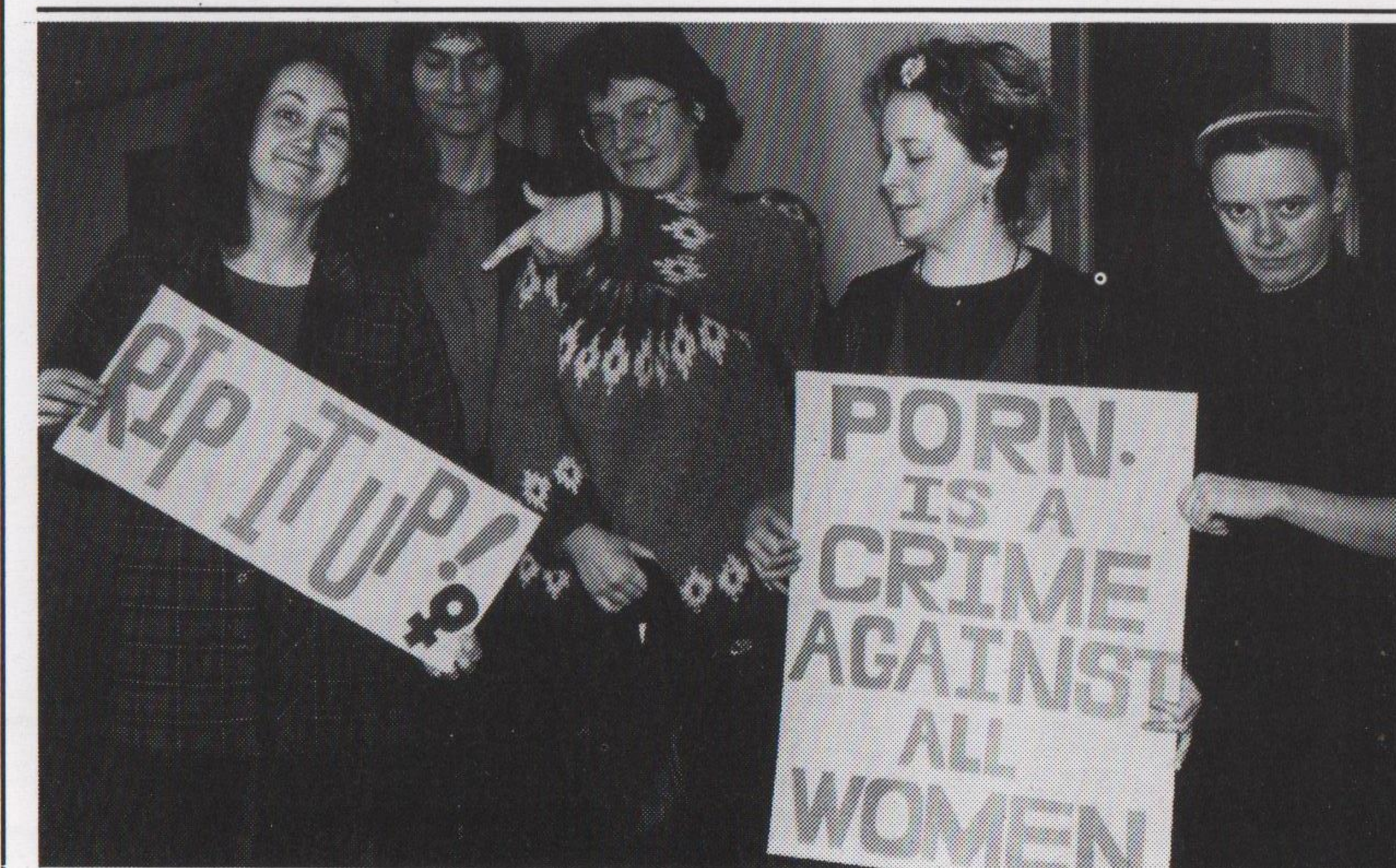
The writers research included contact with CAP, and examples are cited of the experiences of women and children drawn into the industry, what keeps them there (e.g. crack addiction, the logic of 'self hate' often experienced as a result of abuse and rape etc.) and the pressure to do more and more hard-core material.

The second article looked at the 'millionaires' who've been made by publishing porn; increased

tolerance levels for violent porn, and issues about the distribution of porn to newsagents. The final article focused on the limitations of the Obscene Publications Squad, despite the networks of porn and abuse it discovers.

It was very evident when these articles appeared, that pornographers and their supporters are all too ready to fill the 'Letters' pages with their comments. CAP members must make their voices heard too. Whatever Nick Davies might conclude about the 'real' debate about porn, women's lives are affected in all sorts of ways. **We Cannot Remain Silent.**

■ Copies of the Guardian articles are available from the CAP office upon receipt of an A5 SAE.



Bristol women's campaign see page 2 for full report.



# Local Action

## Bristol Women Against Pornography

In October last year as part of the Anarchist Festival, 30 women occupied WH Smiths in Oxford Street, and ripped up all of their porn. It was a wonderful action and inspired me and other women to get a Bristol Anti-Porn Group together. We went to Temple Meads Railway Station in Bristol on 20th December 1994 at 5.00pm rush hour. We tore up and trashed all of John Menzies porn.

We did this because as well as all the usual objections to porn, John Menzies' function at Temple Meads is to provide travellers with reading material and we don't think porn is suitable for this purpose where women can be travelling alone or kids seated opposite.

It was a good action. There were 10 of us altogether. 5 of us got the porn off the shelves and ripped it up; one woman had our megaphone and broadcast what

we were doing and why. She sounded like a BR announcement because of the way it echoed in the station; 4 women leafleted and talked to passers by.

After 10 minutes or so 5 of us were arrested and were later charged with Criminal Damage.

### Found Guilty But Not Very

We pleaded Not Guilty of Unlawful Criminal Damage and were in Court on Feb 27th 1995 to defend ourselves, saying a greater crime would have been committed had we not taken this action in self-defence and in the defence of other women and children.

We had great day in Court. 18 women were at the back of the court supporting us, many women wrote in support and we received donations towards our cost and fines etc. We were well

prepared and eloquent (although I say so myself), and morally we won the day.

The highlight for me was getting the area Manager of John Menzies to get the torn up porn out of a bin liner and then asking him to describe it. We watched as he squirmed and wriggled before the eyes of the magistrates and the 18 women supporting us.

We were found guilty but not very, and conditionally discharged with £20 court costs and £20 compensation to pay each. A bargain!

■ We intend to keep on campaigning, so come and join us. Please write or phone CAP for my phone number and I'll be glad to talk to you. You don't have to get arrested.

BWAP, Box 13, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB

### New Group

Following a request for CAP to provide a speaker at Bradford University, there are plans to set up a student CAP group. We hope this will be the first of many new groups around the country.

■ If you would like to start a CAP local group in your area, or would simply like to get in touch with other local CAP members, contact the CAP office and we can put you in touch.



*A Cambridge local porn shop repainted recently. Looks like the Killer Feminists from Hell are still around somewhere!*

# Campaign News

## WH Smiths - Off the Shelf and Beyond

CAP is once again turning its attentions to the work of WH Smiths. Most of you will remember and may have taken part in 'Off the Shelf' actions to remove porn from the shelves of Smith's stores. Now we're taking our action against them a step further in what we aim to be our major campaign for 1995.

As well as stocking porn in their stores, WH Smith are also the largest distributors of porn to newsagents in the country. We have had several newsagents contact us to complain about the pressure put on them to continue to stock porn and being sent unsolicited titles.

### Porn free newsagents

London CAP have been working closely with a local porn free newsagent Hamdy Shahein, who is taking a public stand against WH Smiths and encouraging his colleagues to join him in becoming porn free. Hamdy is looking for other newsagents to join him in forming a network to take a joint stand against the pressures of Smiths and other major distributors. We want to

support the stand that he's taken and use his contacts to put pressure on Smiths and encourage other newsagents to become porn free. We are also compiling an updated porn free newsagents list.

### What can you do to help?

\* boycott Smiths and encourage friends to join you.

\* look round the newsagents in your area and let us know of any that are porn free.

\* write to your local newspapers telling them what you are doing, why you are looking for porn free newsagents and asking if anyone else knows of one in your area.

\* write to your local newsagents asking them to become porn free - we have drafted a letter to newsagents, if you would like a copy please send a SAE to the office.

\* let the office know of any responses you receive.

■ This is just the first step in the Smith's campaign. Watch this space for updates on how many porn free newsagents we've found so far and how else we are planning to campaign against Smiths.

## CAP - Can you help?

CAP always needs more help, whether it's volunteering in the office, organising campaigning locally, and of course, raising money to keep the campaign going. If you would like to talk about how you might help the campaign, please get in touch

with the office. As with any voluntary organisation, there is never enough money to do everything we would like, so if you can make a donation or organise a small fund-raising event, please do. Every little helps!

# Letters

## Computer porn

"Early last year, I read an article in PC Weekly outlining the prevalence of computer pornography in the workplace. I work as a computer technician for a University... asking around I heard of several occasions which were treated as solitary incidents and therefore not publicised.

I brought the issue up with the PC Services Co-ordination Group (and)... it was decided that Learning Support Services... should have a very clear public position that the existence of offensive, possibly intimidatory material in the institution would be inappropriate and that unsolicited transmission of such material would be completely unacceptable.

A new Regulations document is presently being drafted (for the University) and will include a declaration re: the unacceptability of "offensive material". I have also been in touch with the University's sexual harassment officer (re:) recording complaints of either harassment or involuntary exposure."

■ Have you raised the issue of porn in the workplace? Write and let us know.

### Finally...

a comment of encouragement: "Whatever lies are stacked against us, knowing what we're saying is true will carry us on"

■ CAP News welcomes your letters.