

**Women
Only**

Karaoke and Disco

Friday, 7th May 1993 from 7.30-11.30 pm

☞

19 Winchester Road, NW3

Nearest tube: Swiss Cottage (Jubilee line)

Buses: 31, 13, 113, 82, C11, C12, 268

☞

Bar

☞

Creche

☞

Fully Accessible

☞

£3.50/£2.50 unwaged

CAP Local Groups Meeting

Saturday, May 8th 12-5 pm

If you are, or would like to be, active in your local area, please join us at this meeting. We will be discussing how to co-ordinate our actions, what our campaigning priorities should be, as well as exchanging ideas, advice and experience. There will also be new resource sheets available with advice on how to complain (and who to!), how to get a local group off the ground, actions you could take, and what support and resources the CAP office can give you.

There will be a pooled fare, so don't let the distance put you off, however far you are from London!

The event will be held at London Women's Centre. Please let us know you're coming.

If you would like to come to the karaoke and disco listed above, we can put you up at a friendly feminist's place, free of charge, on Friday night.

CAP Newsletter

Campaign Against Pornography

Inside:

Angry Women

Report on Petrol Stations

Lies about Porn and Feminism

Re-CAP: Censorship — An Analysis

Winter 1993

75p

A Report from Bucks CAP: Guide to Oil Companies' Policies on Porn in Petrol Station Retail Shops

Gulf

Gulf has 150 service stations, 100 of which are commissionally operated, the remaining operate under a tenancy agreement.

They state they have no say over what is sold on sites where they are contracted only to supply fuel but give discretion to managers on company-owned sites on what they stock.

Guidelines given do not suggest the covering of the material specifically, but it is to be kept out of the view of children and in line with what WH Smith sells.

Due to complaints they are reviewing policy.

Total/Circle K (latter part of Murdoch empire)

Total state that no pornography is sold by them — only men's magazines!!

Withdrew porn after complaints, but reinstated material in "modesty bags" because of demand and, presumably, higher profit margins.

Texaco

Texaco state the due to demand they sell covered pornography but insist that they do not believe it degrades women and justify themselves by also stocking material aimed at women.

Esso

States it has no say on what dealer/own-site stock but recommends top-selling titles and suppliers and has to display them with covers.

Shell

Shell states that their policy in owned and franchised sites is not to stock material that is illegal or offensive.

However it happily suggest the stocking of the top-selling six titles recommended by WH Smith and John Menzies. This includes 'Fiesta'; recent copies have shown women tied up.

Acknowledging that the material is offensive to some customers, it recommends that the material be displayed with opaque covers.

Ironically, Shell, in conjunction with Ford, has sponsored courses for women to give them driving confidence.

British Petroleum

BP on owned and franchised sites allow material to be sold at the discretion of the manager, but due to complaints recommends they are covered.

Action groups within the company, such as "Women in BP" are campaigning to stop this material being sold.

Fina

Three-quarters of Fina sites are dealer-operated; the remaining are company-owned.

Fina states that it doesn't approve of the sale of porn and because of complaints from customers and employees is removing material from its own sites and discourages dealer-operated sites to stock it.

Where women have complained, Fina have removed material promptly.

Other companies

Other oil companies are sensitive about Fina's policy and have obviously received many complaints from customers.

Companies should be reviewing policy to include covenants in tenancy agreements that ensure dealers to not stock porn and to refuse to enter into contracts to supply fuel to independent retailers that sell the material. It is patently obvious speaking to female area managers that they don't like the presence of porn but have to enforce male senior managers' decisions.

In other news...

The Daily Express is currently carrying Northern & Shell [not related to the oil company] ads for 'Forum' and 'For Him' in its sports pages.

The official comment: "Neither we (Daily Express) nor Northern & Shell intend to degrade or debase women in any way."

Letters to:

Mr. Michael Moore
Advertisement Director
Express Newspaper plc
Ludgate House, 245 Blackfriars Rd
London SE1 9UX
071-928 8000

Bucks CAP



Keep that news coming in!

Letters of complaint should be addressed to:

Texaco

Tony d' Angibau
Customer Services
Dorcan House, Eldene Drive
Swindon Wilts. SN3 3TX
(0793) 555000

Total

Terry Burton-Lee
84 High Street
South Dunstable LU6 3JA
(0582) 600202

Shell

Customer Services
Shell-Mex House
The Strand
London WC2R 0DX

Esso

Gay Hamilton
Esso House
Ermyrn Way
Leatherhead
Surrey KT22 8UX
(071) 834 6677

Fina

Customer Services
Fina House
Ashley Avenue
Epsom
Surrey KT18 5AD

Gulf Oil

Christine Mooney
Retail Development Specialist
The Quadrangle, Imperial Square
Chletenham GL50 1TF
(0242) 225225

BP

Wendy Fenwick
BP House
Breakspair Way
Hemel Hempstead
Herts. HP2 4UL
(0442) 22323

Urgent: We need your support and energy!

Dear Members,

CAP is currently working towards becoming self-funding, and our fundraising plans are going well and enabling us to continue our work. However, the only way to really ensure our survival into the future is to build a regular subsidy through members banker's orders. This will enable us to use our time and resources for what we are here for — fighting the porn industry — at the moment, too much of our energy is having to go into fundraising.

We are now halfway towards our target of £500 per month in banker's orders. This is made up of members giving us anything from £2 to £50 per month. Please think about contributing to this subsidy — however little you could afford. Between us, we can keep CAP alive simply by doing this.

The porn industry is a multi-million pound industry, with high-powered links and interests at all levels of our society. We cannot let this industry get away with the abuse, degradation and blatant sexism they inflict on us and leave them unchallenged. It's time we really put them on the defensive — let them know that we are aware of what they are doing and that we're watching them and working to stop them.

This means we need a guaranteed financial base, and also your active support for our campaigns. Don't be an armchair member — if you care about the harm done in and by porn enough to join CAP, then why not really get active? On Saturday, May 8th, we'll be holding a national meeting for anyone who is or wants to be involved in their local area (see back cover). Please join us! Or ring CAP for details of actions in your local area. If there are none, we can put you in touch with other members locally, or let you know what you could do as an individual to help our national campaigns.

Hope to hear from you soon — please help in any way you can, and fill in the banker's order form below.

Best wishes,

Rachel Wingfield, CAP Co-ordinator

Affiliation / Membership Form

This form is for groups/organisations who wish to affiliate to CAP and for individuals who wish to become members of the campaign. If you subscribe to CAP, you will be entitled to a quarterly newsletter and up-to-date information on CAP's activities and what's going on in your local area. Women members will be entitled to participate in executive decisions.

Name/Organisation _____

Name of contact (groups/organisations) _____

Mailing address _____

Postcode _____ Phone _____

Sex (individual members) ☐ Female ☐ Male

Enclosed: Affiliation £ _____ Donation £ _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Subscription Rates

Individual:	Unwaged/Low waged £5	Please return this form with a cheque or postal order made payable to the Campaign Against Pornography to:
	Waged £10	
	High waged £15	
Organisations:	Less than 100 members £15	11 Goodwin Street London N4 3HQ
	More than 100 members £25	

Bankers Order

Please pay Campaign Against Pornography, Kingsway Branch, NatWest Bank, Account No. 038 04992, Sort Code 5053015, the sum of £ _____ beginning _____, thereafter every _____ until further notice.

Signed _____ Date _____

Direct Action in West Yorkshire 1979-1985 "Fightback!"

This issue, we publish the text of Dusty Rhodes' speech at the November CAP event "The International Sex Industry: Women Fight Back".

My talk tonight is not about the powerlessness of women. It is about the strength of women and their continual struggle against those men who commit terrible crimes against them. It is a tribute to the thousands of women who have fought back and who are today fighting back against all forms of male violence.

My talk is a particular tribute to a group called "Angry Women" who waged an arson campaign against the pornographers in the Leeds and West Yorkshire area for six years.

But some general background first.

The years between 1970 to 1986 were a very active political period for feminists in England and indeed in many other parts of the world. Male violence became the focus for many feminists and they demonstrated their outrage in different ways.

In India, women protested at the widespread use of sexist advertisements and led a militant campaign in which they dismantled and burnt the hoardings displaying the sexist advertisements; they also campaigned about the increase in imports of pornography.

The Preying Mantis Women's Brigade, an American group, led many vigorous campaigns against pornography. A particular target was Hustler, a pornographic magazine which regularly featured women being mutilated, beaten and abused. In 1978 one particular issue included a so-called "joke" by Larry Flynt about Cindy Lee Hudspeth, one of thirty women murdered by Kenneth Bianchi, commonly referred to as the Hillside Strangler. Flynt was quoted as saying that "You gotta treat 'em rough. After knocking off a couple of bimbos the Hillside likes to kick back and relax with Dewars Lite Label". Shops selling the magazine were picketed and stocks raided and burnt by women activists.

In Germany, a women's group called Red Zora firebombed numerous sex cinemas and sex shops.

In England the issue of male violence galvanised many women into action. Women's Aid Federation had already set

up a network of refuges and Rape Crisis Centres were opening in many communities.

In the mid-1970's, radical and revolutionary feminists were presenting us with an analysis of male violence which was to generate many a heated discussion. This was a period of listening and learning for many women who were later to become activists.

Between 1980 and 1982 there were 4 major national conferences in England, which reflected the growing awareness around different aspects of male violence.

The Sexual Violence Against Women conference was held in Leeds in 1980, in a city where Peter Sutcliffe had brutally murdered thirteen women over a five year period and where women lived in an atmosphere of fear. A march through Leeds city centre protested at the total incompetence of the police and demanded serious action to catch this serial killer of women.

The campaigning group Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) grew out of this conference, regional groups grew up around the country, organising and supporting many different actions. 1,000 women attended WAVAW's first national conference in London in 1981.

The Male Power and Sexual Abuse of Girls conference held in Manchester in 1982 enabled many women and girls to break the silence around sexual abuse by setting up incest survivors' groups around the country.

The first national anti-pornography conference was held in Oxford 1982.

There were major changes in the porn industry itself. This period not only marked an expansion of the sex industry in general, but also marked an increase in the demand for particular types of pornography, which included child pornography, sado-masochism, bondage, mutilation and racist portrayals. Abuse of use of power was the order of the day, not just nudity.

There was also an increase in mail-order porn, which far exceeds that sold in sex shops, and there is little control over its distribution.

In the late 1960's there were some 12 sex shops in England: one in Chesterfield,

the rest in Soho. By 1981 that number had grown to 143, with shops in most major towns and cities.

In this changing climate came a new form of entertainment which swept the UK in 1981, namely videos.

In the city of Leeds, twenty video shops opened in a six month period. Leeds WAVAW was alarmed at the type of videos being promoted for hire. Many were coined "video nasties" because of the horrific scenes of physical and sexual violence, sadism, mutilation and cannibalism and unsurprisingly, women feature in the majority of these videos.

One video shop, less than a mile away from one of the brutal murders by Peter Sutcliffe, was opened with the promotion of a video called *SS Experiment Camp*. The whole shop front was adorned with posters showing a naked woman strung upside down to a pole, feet bound, her body lacerated and bleeding, and large profile of a Nazi in the background.

A local woman was so appalled that she complained to the police and demanded that they invoke the Indecent Displays Act; the police response was to do nothing.

Mainstream films too, were showing more explicit scenes of physical and sexual violence. Demonstrations were held around the country against films such as *The Shining*, *Dressed to Kill* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Groups of women disrupted film shows and threw paint and other pungent substances at the screen.

Leeds WAVAW launched a campaign to stop the hiring of such videos, and when in 1982 the video *Snuff* was being promoted, the campaign won much public support; it was able to organise pickets of video and sex shops and collected a petition of 15,000 signatures during one week — the demand was simple: "to ban the distribution of *Snuff*".

WAVAW invited the local press and TV to view video nasties and the *Snuff* video; they agreed and their response was one of shock, and they led their own media campaign which included demands for a ban on some and a call for a system of control. For example, at that time, an eleven year old boy could hire any video, because there was no control.

At the same time as these perfectly legal acts of protest were happening, an anonymous group had already committed 5 arson attacks against sex shops in the region.

This period of direct action was in fact an arson campaign which started in the West Yorkshire area in 1979 and which was to continue for the next six years.

The group was called "Angry Women". Their actions had echoes of a period of resistance and militancy by some suffragettes who, in 1912, frustrated at the lack of progress to win the vote, began an arson campaign. It became one of the most frequently used weapons by the Women's Social and Political Union to press their case for votes for women.

During those 5 years, there were some 25 arson attacks on sex and video shops; 8 shops were completely destroyed in the Leeds area and surrounding towns of Bradford, Halifax and Huddersfield. And an estimated half a million pounds worth of damage was caused, according to an interview which appeared in *Outwrite* in December 1988.

Headlines in the Yorkshire Evening Post, such as "Glad to see it gone!", "Sex shop attack £1,000 reward", "Arson attacks at video shops" were a regular feature.

The Chapelton sex shop was attacked three times by Angry Women. Two attacks during two nights and the shop was a burnt-out shell, even through they rebuilt it. It was a favourite target, probably because it was owned by David Sullivan, owner of the largest chain of sex shops in the UK.

Sullivan was to face a vigorous campaign from the community in the Chapelton area and the ruling Labour group who opposed his attempt to secure a licence for the sex shop under new legislation.

But no members of Angry Women were ever caught, although in 1983 the police did arrest and charge Connie O'Donovan, a lesbian activist, with conspiracy to cause criminal damage. Someone had stolen her car and driven it through a sex cinema in Leeds.

She was kept in custody for nearly three days and denied access to her solicitor. This was a very dangerous situation for Connie because it was clear that the police had failed to arrest any women in

four years, conspiracy charges are notoriously difficult to contest and often result in innocent people being jailed. However, a well-organised Defence Campaign was set up, experienced criminal counsel hired and great support from Leeds women and many other around the country.

The case was thrown out of the Crown Court and Connie walked free.

The feminist newspaper, *Outwrite*, which had fully supported Angry Women's actions, published an exclusive interview in their last issue in December 1988 with one member of the group, thus providing us with some interesting information about them.

In the interview, the member of Angry Women was asked what planning was involved. The response was this:

"Our principal concern was that there should be nobody on the premises that were going to be attacked. We took great precautions to assure ourselves of this; we watched buildings, sometimes as long as three months, to establish patterns of comings and goings, to see if the curtains had been moved and if there was anybody on the premises at night."

Asked how they selected their targets, the reply was:

"We made it our business to know who the pornographers were, and that was easy because pornographers like to brag about their activity and you could read about them in the News of the World. We knew who owned what, their retail outlets and so on and we had done extensive surveys of Leeds and surrounding areas to map the locations of sex shops and video shops selling porn."

There was some police harassment of feminists and lesbian activists at the time, but it was limited to just a few women being questioned. The police did arrive at one feminist household with a search warrant and did remove some very curious objects, but the event was enough to cause concern, particularly for the lesbian community. However WAVAW took responsibility in providing women with information about what to do in the event of police visits; this proved fairly successful, as every woman managed to keep them on the doorstep.

Finally, I want to talk about the last big organised action by Leeds women. At the local Polytechnic, a third year art exhibition called "Fireworks" was being promoted; ironically, its name was much

more in tune with the direct action taken against it.

The display contained five sculptures which portrayed gross acts of violence against women — one sculpture showed the bloodied remains of a woman violently murdered and dissected, her head, breast and hand wrapped in clingfilm and squashed into a fridge with rotting food. The second showed a woman laid on her back, hands bound above her head, open legs revealed mutilated genitals. Four stakes with shredded porn magazines attached at one end were pierced through her breasts and stomach. Gashes and claw marks covered her bloodied body. The others were just as horrific.

The response and action was immediate and simple. A group of eight women broke into the gallery during the day and, armed with hammers and piping, they smashed and destroyed the five sculptures.

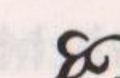
Unfortunately, 5 women were arrested and charged with criminal damage.

Of course there was uproar from the art establishment — the exhibition had been misinterpreted; this was art and it was sacrosanct.

The Leeds Women Defence campaign went into action once again, and another lengthy trial in the Crown Court ended with the Judge condemning the exhibition, finding the women guilty; they were fined, and some bound to keep the peace.

But the action revealed some interesting facts. Eight women students in the Fine Arts department were appealing against their poor degrees results, which they considered as unjust. All 8 students had refused the sexual advances made by male lecturers; there were further allegations of racism and mismanagement.

There has not been enough time to talk about the many other actions — but let's say that criminal damage was a popular activity for many Leeds activists.



CAP would like to stress that we do not advocate illegal action. However it is important for us to know the background of the anti-porn movement in the UK, because women's campaigns and action are usually written out of history. We refer readers to our editorial policy on the inside back cover.

Lies About Porn and Feminism

By Joan Scanlon and Liz Kelly

Pornography has been an issue over which feminists have long been divided. In recent years these disagreements have taken a much more public form — with a number of well-known feminists beginning by taking an 'anti-anti-porn position' (the original orientation of Feminists Against Censorship), and moving to what can only be described as a pro-pornography position. These views are being expressed not in women's movement magazines and journals, but in the mainstream press, which never seems to tire of pieces in which women revise — not to mention recant — earlier strongly felt feminist positions. A central complaint in these writings is that the feminist campaigns against pornography are restricting women's freedom to have radical and adventurous fantasies, and that this is a serious obstacle to women's liberation. In this article we want to take issue with some of the ways in which feminist anti-pornography analysis and activism is dismissed and misrepresented.

Porn and the reality of women's experience

Most defenders of pornography appear not to have read women's accounts of the links between pornography, sexism, sexual harassment, rape, child sexual abuse — or they could not dismiss their testimony so lightly. It is only possible to defend pornography if you shift the argument away from its solid reality as a massive industry which exploits women and children, and away from the reality of women and children's lives. Any reference to pornography as part of the actual day-to-day context of women and children's experience of subordination is therefore necessarily dismissed as 'emotion rather than analysis'. This familiar contempt for a felt response to pornography as

sexual violence — rather than merely as a set of representational practices — allows these writers to depict women who are anti-porn as humourless and prudish, irrational and unsophisticated and to assert that anti-porn campaigning can be equated with religious fundamentalism. This strategy enables Elizabeth Wilson, amongst others, to define political consistency as dogma, consciousness-raising as evangelism, and anti-porn activism as repression.

Another variation of this argument is that anti-pornography campaigns distract attention from more important issues, and that we should be concerned not with pornography but "acts" of sexual violence. If nothing else there is the simple fact that some pornography is a record of acts of sexual violence towards the women and children in it. Alongside this many of those active in campaigns against pornography are survivors of (often porn-related) sexual violence or are involved because of the accounts they have heard from women and children in refuges, who call rape crisis lines, use services for survivors of sexual abuse and who come to young people's housing projects.

Pornography and sexual violence

The Campaign Against Pornography addresses the connections between pornography and oppression in a number of different ways. We are not just interested in the construction of images, but also in how they are produced, how and why they are consumed, who consumes them, and what the consequences are. Linda Marciano's autobiography *Ordeal* is testimony that *Deep Throat* involved the brutal coercion and rape of its 'willing' female star; each piece of child pornography involves the sexual abuse of a child/children. Can it be simply a coincidence that most convicted sex offenders and sex murderers are found to have large collections of pornography? Or that most men who abuse large numbers of

children have collections of child pornography? These is an obvious relationship between the key theme in much pornography that women enjoy forced sex, and the treatment of rape by the police, judiciary and media. One example of this is the absolute authority with which innumerable judges assert in their summing up statements that 'when women say no they don't always mean no'.

In researching the links between pornography and sexual violence CAP is not seeking to establish that there is only one way in which men's attitudes and behaviour are influenced by pornography. For some men, pornography simply reinforces their everyday misogyny, for others it may encourage them to go beyond familiar sexism, and for too many it provides an instruction manual for the practices they demand that others (women and children) engage in. A few men consciously resist the idea that such behaviour, from sexism to sexual violence, is necessary to their masculinity; this usually includes an anti-pornography position.

One of the most frequent assertions we encounter is that anti-porn feminists think that pornography is the cause of women's oppression; that we think women's liberation could be achieved simply by getting rid of pornography. The slogan from the early 1970's "Porn is the theory — rape is the practice" is often quoted as if to sum up our analysis. But as Susanne Kappeler has said on a number of occasions, "Pornography doesn't cause rape — men do". The demand for 'scientific' proof of causal links between pornography and sexual violence has consistently blocked discussion of why men consume pornography and the impacts it has on their thoughts, feelings and behaviour towards women and children.

The links between pornography, sexism, sexual violence and abuse should not need testing under laboratory conditions. The women and children used in the making of porno-

graphy, and the women and children who suffer the consequences of its presence in their lives do not need any further proof. That doesn't mean though that we ought not to explore just what these links and connections are. Unless we understand how pornography operates in the world we are insufficiently equipped to deal not only with the industry, but with its more insidious manifestations in our lives.

Taking on the industry

Another common charge against anti-porn activism is that it is a 'single issue' campaign, which has diverted attention from more important aspects of women's oppression, such as inequality at work. Anti-porn campaigns have consistently sought to demonstrate how the sex industry is a microcosm of women's institutionalised inequality and the ways in which women's subordination profits men. The sex industry is part of capitalist relations in which women's bodies are the product to be marketed, and it depends upon women's unequal access to employment. It is not that equal pay and equal access to education are "more" or "less" important issues than pornography, but that they are part of an explanation of why some women do sex work for money. Just as more obvious labour markets are becoming international, so is that within the sex industry — the most exploited women in both being women from countries impoverished by Western imperialism. 'Developments' such as sex tourism, mail-order brides and the importation of women from South East Asian countries to, for example, Japan and Germany to work as hostesses, strippers and prostitutes, have all been concerns for feminist analysis and activism.

It is recent work by radical feminists which has located pornography within a broader analysis of the changes in the sex industry internationally. Rather than an "universal and ahistorical" analysis of patriarchy, what women like Catherine MacKinnon are producing is a challenging and critical account of sexual economics — the

changing patriarchal relations within which class, race, and colonialism are central features. She and other anti-pornography feminists have shown up the ways in which pornography serves not only to promote sexual inequality, but also to reinforce and eroticise other forms of oppression. Amongst other things, it reproduces racist sexual stereotypes, fetishises disability, presents lesbianism for the male gaze, and denies the historical meaning of fascism.

One of the most frequent assertions we encounter is that anti-porn feminists think that pornography is the cause of women's oppression; that we think women's liberation could be achieved simply by getting rid of pornography.

The Campaign Against Pornography exists to encourage and enable women to express their opposition to a multi-billion dollar international industry which reflects, legitimates and thrives on the systematic degradation and exploitation of women and children.

Pornography and censorship

Even where it is recognised that some kinds of pornography are violent and degrading to women, we are still told that we cannot afford to campaign against the industry because some of us may lose access to images that turn us on. In other words, the "pleasure" of a number of mostly white Western women should be safeguarded at the expense of women who do not have the luxury of choice. The fact that some women are aroused by pornographic representations is often used to argue that feminists should not campaign against pornography; although this argument is not used in defence of other areas of 'free expression'. Most white people will have laughed (and many still do laugh) at racist jokes. The fact the white people may take pleasure in this form of oppression does not alter the

fact that the jokes are racist, and none of these writers would argue for the 'right' of whites to enjoy racism. Many Black radicals have developed a powerful analysis and understanding of how racist representations reproduce a sense of inferiority amongst Black people themselves. Black women have revealed the ways in which pornography eroticises racism. If we lived in a world where all of us were equal, where difference did not mean power difference, and where power was no longer sexy, there would be no use for porn. In the meantime, there can be no justification for porn, and no legitimate means of claiming it as the "right" of a few.

It is now a commonplace of attacks on anti-pornography feminists to impute to them a crude pro-censorship position and to accuse them of joining hands with right-wing moralists such as Mary Whitehouse. For this reason there has been no informed debate around those legislative initiatives to limit the production, sale or distribution of pornography which have made radical departures from traditional obscenity legislation. The US ordinances devised by Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin were concerned with women's civil rights, and Clare Short's "Page 3" bill was concerned with trade descriptions — opening up a debate about what constitutes 'news'. Neither of these could have been used to ban films or books, plays or paintings — yet they were repeatedly described as "censorship" in order to produce a sense of panic about the restriction of freedom of expression.

It is extraordinary how many times one reads of the impossibility of establishing a clear dividing line between pornography and 'erotica', with the rather obvious conclusion being drawn that there may be none. This concern always follows from a desire to protect "positive" images, and is never concerned with ways of dealing with "negative" ones. It also goes hand in hand with the argument that critical analysis is in itself a form of censorship. What this means is that if you object to

pornography you must want to ban it, and in the somewhat unlikely event of a feminist anti-porn feminist being appointed Director of Public Prosecutions, you would put the British art establishment at serious risk. Anti-pornography feminists are repeatedly caricatured as the "ban and burn it brigade", and in this way, while claiming to defend a body of images against state censorship, a repository of establishment values are protected from feminist analysis and challenge.

Those who are arguing the case for pornography have played on the anxiety of those liberals who see all forms of censorship as linked with authoritarian state repression. Few, however, would dispute the fact that legal restrictions (ineffectual as they are) on our "freedom" to produce images which incite to racial hatred constitute legitimate censorship. By deliberately confusing pornography with sex, they have also encouraged fear amongst those of left-wing persuasion about being associated with legislative reform in the area of sexuality. We are told that gay men and lesbians would be targeted if anti-pornography legislation was introduced; and this argument is often used by those who have no interest in defending gay and lesbian rights on other occasions. It is true that anti-porn legislation might restrict gay and lesbian pornography, along with mainstream porn, but there are other important rights which these groups still lack in society, and the "right" to produce and consume pornography is not one that CAP is interested in defending — even for oppressed groups.

CAP is opposed to all forms of pornography, not only that produced by and for heterosexual men, but also gay male pornography, lesbian pornography, pornography for heterosexual women. None of these challenge or resist the message of mainstream pornography, that sex is bound up with dominance and subordination, indeed they reinforce and celebrate this way of seeing and relating to other people. We want equality for women and other

oppressed groups, but we don't accept that this requires having "equal opportunity" to abuse, objectify, and exploit others through the production of pornography.

Pornography and the imagination

We are told that pornography is harmless because it has no direct relationship to reality; that it exists in the realm of fantasy and can even prevent men from raping women. Several contradictions begin to emerge here. The women in pornography are real for a start. Secondly we are being asked to accept that there is a relationship between pornography and sexual violence, but only as a reason for defending it. Thus, connections are acknowledged where it can be argued that pornography limits sexual violence, but are otherwise dismissed as conjecture.

If we lived in a world where all of us were equal, where difference did not mean power difference, and where power was no longer sexy, there would be no use for porn.

There is a further contradiction in the argument that pornography, like art, is an exercise of imagination which removes it from the world of circumstances, while insisting that to restrict it would be an attack on sex itself. This slippage from porn to sex (from alleged fantasy to reality — or is sex only fantasy too?) allows pro-porn writers to label anti-porn activists as anti-sex. This is rather bewildering to many of us, since (a) we thought they were saying that pornography was "just images" and (b) we thought that sex was about relationships between people. This is the fundamental deception in the defence of pornography by so-called "sexual radicals"; its status as representation or as liberated sexuality depends entirely on expediency — it's either real or unreal depending on whose freedom is at stake.

If we could shift the debate around pornography away from this confusion with sexuality and sex *per se* towards questions of representation and the links between the pornography industry and other forms of exploitation, then we might find some measure of agreement on which to act. As Patricia Hynes has argued, "If EPA (the Environmental Protection Agency) can define toxicity in an industrial world saturated with synthetic chemicals, then why can't we define pornography in literature, art and film?" (*Trouble and Strife* 15, Spring 1989). Elizabeth Wilson acknowledges that "all societies place some legal parameters around what it is or is not permissible to say or show" and that "there are limits to what any society should accept in terms of images and representations". Her suggestion that the Sex Discrimination Act could be strengthened to further "the regulation of representations" is the first constructive proposal to be put forward by those who criticise anti-pornography activism, and there seems no reason why it could not have been presented as part of a dialogue rather than a dispute based on false oppositions (pro/anti censorship; pro/anti sex).

Pornography has resonances for all feminists, and we should be fighting the industry together, instead of allowing differences and disagreements between us to be used by the mainstream media to fuel anti-feminist propaganda. Yet some feminists continue to flirt with the media, who never tire of porn coverage, and to misrepresent the position of those feminists with whom they disagree, and the history of our movement. It is time to reclaim the term feminist for the politics of the women's liberation movement in the 1990's, and to insist that feminism has nothing to do with the construction of 'freedom' as the right to spend an afternoon watching porn videos. Freedom for feminist anti-porn activists means the pursuit of equality — whether in the cinema or in the bedroom — and the liberation of women and children worldwide from sexual violence and oppression.

Censorship: An Analysis by Annie Blue

Reprinted from *Feminism and Censorship: The Current Debate*

Censorship and freedom (of expression / action / movement / speech) are relative to power, and the nature of both depends on the power predominant at any given moment.

Censorship and Power — The Inseparable Couple, or, 'You can't have one without the other'

The concept of censorship cannot be examined outside the context of power relations because censorship is essential to the maintenance of power. Women are controlled by acts of censorship which effectively limit and dictate the conditions of our existence and assign us to the status of an oppressed class. Only those who possess power — men — have the means of controlling/censoring/limiting those who do not. In our society men have economic, physical and social power; when women challenge this and name the means by which we are oppressed, we are identifying the acts of censorship which control us, maintain our position as a sex class, and at the same time uphold male supremacy.

Censorship — A Radical Feminist's Definition

Censorship is what men do/have done to women in order to control us and what they tell us we are doing when we try to stop them. Applications of the term under male supremacy are predictably flexible, contradictory, convenient and effective in silencing women. For example, action can (rightly) be taken via legislation against racist material, language, behaviour and so on, without thought of censorship, on the grounds that it incites racial hatred. When women demand action against pornography because it incites sexual hatred, this is called censorship. Again, the laws of libel and slander protect the individual from lies, but though women are

falsely labelled as passive, available, subservient, willing objects, though what we are or want is lied about on a massive scale in pornography, when we demand an end to the lies this is called censorship.

Censorship and Freedom — The Mathematics of Freedom: 0 (no power) x 1,000r (rights) = 0 (no freedom)

Freedom is professed to be a basic 'human right'; theoretically everyone is entitled to 'it', but in reality there exists no such thing because 'freedom' is relative to power. Those who have power — men — dictate the nature of 'freedom', they decide and construct the nature of our 'freedoms' for us by allowing us certain 'rights'. These rights, e.g. women's rights, equal opportunities, which are supposedly basic and intrinsic, can be removed at any time without redress, can be used against us and are impossible to enforce without the co-operation and approval of the power holders. They are in fact merely privileges, accorded or withdrawn depending on the inclination of those in power, or on the climate of the time.

'Equality of opportunity' lulls us into a false sense of security by offering an apparently attractive alternative to exploitation and oppression.

(To function as intended, equality of opportunity assumes a state of equality of persons that does not exist in a patriarchal society. Individual women's 'successes' are negated by the massive inequalities necessary for the continued subordination of all women. A woman may succeed in entering a field once reserved for men, but though she may be 'equal' she will have to work harder, or compromise, and may still be the

target of verbal and physical abuse, sexual harassment, discrimination, and rape, and is still defined by her sex in pornography. 'Equality of opportunity' lulls us into a false sense of security by offering an apparently attractive alternative to exploitation and oppression. It can also be dangerous because those in power can use it to justify their position and regain ground lost to women, for example in requiring that women's studies courses are open to men, and in other ways invading and policing women's space.)

In 'our' male-centred culture, women are relentlessly censored into unfreedom by custom, tradition, language, religion, the law, education, the whole male system. Our unfreedom is rigorously enforced, by definitions of 'normal' behaviour and femininity, by heterosexism, by pornography and all forms of male violence, by our objectification, by our economic status — whilst simultaneously we are assured that we are 'free' and told that everyone else has a 'right' to their 'freedom' also. This doublespeak (the male Authorised Version of Reality) is intended to conceal the actuality of the woman-hating/censoring nature of male-centred culture which manufactures our options, restricts our actions, prescribes our reactions, divides us, packages us, bargains for us, ghettoises us, trades us, objectifies us, kills us, rapes us, beats us and tells us we are free.

The Censorship of Women's Existence — or, All the World's a Sportsfield but only Men are Really Players

Male dominance and control have engineered a culture which has evolved around male ideas, attitudes and experiences, attaching significance and importance to male existence and marginalising women's existence. In 'our' male-centred culture (MCC!) women have been assigned to the status of

supporters, standing on the sidelines of a global sportsfield where men are the designers of the game, the rule-makers, tacticians, managers, players, referees, profit-makers, decision-makers; it is without exception a man's game. Women are allowed on the field of play only in prescribed roles, as cheerleaders perhaps or programme sellers, or maybe the team mascot. Occasionally we are permitted to participate as substitutes, but only when we have gone through rigorous training and proved beyond doubt that we are 'fit' to play, that we understand the tactics, promise to play to the rules and follow the game to the letter (Margaret Thatcher is a gem of a substitute right-back!). The substitutes pose no threat because they are immediately dropped if they don't play the game or perform well as players. The power behind the game is in the boardroom with the backers, the directors and the managers — the men who control the global sportsfield. The strength of the team is cemented in the locker room, another no-go area for women, with a language and a culture of its own, that bond players, managers, referees and moneymen alike and effectively keep women in our place — off the field.

Our unfreedom is rigorously enforced, by definitions of 'normal' behaviour and femininity, by heterosexism, by pornography and all forms of male violence, by our objectification, by our economic status — whilst simultaneously we are assured that we are 'free' and told that everyone else has a 'right' to their 'freedom' also.

In order to sustain and uphold our secondary role and in an effort to disguise it, women are given the 'freedom' to move along the sidelines and watch the game. We have all been well-grounded in crowd behaviour, we know how to be good sports and are well-rehearsed in when to cheer. In this way a feeling of participating/belonging is cultivated and we can come to believe in our importance as supporters — the

team needs us and our energy is put into the game rather than one another. Some women have more privileged positions and more comfort, depending on colour, class, marital status, depending on whether we produce more players or service the team — but let any of us enter the field without permission, challenge the rules or protest from the sidelines that we have had enough, that the game renders us worthless and invisible, that we are enraged by our image — let any of us demand an existence separate from the game — and the wrath of the gamekeepers is swift and terrible. The penalties for attempting to change the tactics or challenge the rules include ridicule, legal action or verbal or physical abuse. The penalty for trying to transform or stop the game may result in detention in prison or a psychiatric institution, torture or death. But only this will do, for as the game goes on, women live and die on the sidelines.

To Legislate or Not to Legislate... Heads You Win, Tails We Lose

Present legislation against pornography could be compared to a large plaster applied (late) to a main artery injury. Better than nothing but somewhat lacking in effectiveness.

The law and the legal system has long been recognised by the majority of feminists as patriarchy fossilised. Movement, when perceptible is eclipsed. There is documented evidence of how it works systematically against women. We witness it in the pronouncement of judges, the habitually light sentences given to men for crimes against women, the treatment of women in rape cases, the failure to recognise rape in marriage as a crime, the trivialisation of wife battering and torture, the high percentage of women in prison for crimes from which men walk free, the comparatively high number of women in prison for indeterminate periods, legislation around prostitution and abortion, and so on and so on.

Feminists also agree that the whole system must be radically changed if

male attitudes, values and assumptions are to be challenged rather than perpetuated.

Proposed new legislation (via a 'sex discrimination through pornography' bill which provides civil remedies) will be part of this same system; it will continue to be administered by white middle-class men, and will entail individual women being put on trial (as in rape cases) in order to prove they are 'damaged'. So what is the immediate alternative? The Obscene Publications Act? The escalation of sadistic pornography, with even computer games rating 'X' certificates because they contain mutilated women's bodies? The sexualisation of girl children, reflected in the increase in child pornography at one end of the scale and the sale of make-up to five-year-old girls in popular stores at the other? What is the foreseeable end when explicit sexual violence against women is packaged to sell products and women are killed as a turn-on for men, in 'snuff' films that can be hired from some video shops from around £1.50 (as the researchers for Sarah Daniels' play 'Masterpieces' discovered)?

Tight legislation (incorporating ground covered by the Dworkin-MacKinnon ordinance) which re-defines pornography from a radical feminist perspective, moving away from patriarchal ideas of 'obscenity' and 'depravity', and towards naming it as male violence towards women, would go some way towards challenging the attitudes and values of the system. It would affirm that women will no longer be silenced. It would get the issues into the public arena. It would clarify the porn/erotica, porn/art blur. It may check the rapid slide of increasingly violent pornographic images into advertising, the media, etc. and thus into our everyday lives. In a system created by men for men, legislation against pornography will have its limitations, it can and probably will be used against us, but until the revolution... what else do we have?

Feminism and Censorship, *Gail Chester and Julianne Dickey, eds. (Prism Press 1988)*

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Update on Porn-Free Companies

In each issue we'll be printing the names of companies who have a policy of not using pornography to advertise their products (e.g. calendars) or who refuse to stock pornography, where others in their trade do. Please send us any names you feel should be printed in this section.

Motor industry Uniroyal Goodyear Michelin

Petrol stations Very few petrol stations are porn-free, but some are learning! See this issue's special report from Bucks CAP.

Newsagents We now have available a "Directory of Porn-Free Newsagents", which we will send to you in return for a small donation and S.A.E. Please send us details of any newsagents in your area who do not stock pornography so that we can add it to the directory.

CAP Newsletter Editorial Policy

This issue of the CAP newsletter has been produced by: Dianne Butterworth, Hilary McCollum, Joan Scanlon and Rachel Wingfield. Although we take collective responsibility for the contents, 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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Regular Features:

Letters	Editorial policy is stated on the Letters page in this issue.
Local Groups	Information about action by local CAP groups.
Re-CAP	This section contains articles previously published in other journals, newspapers or books which may be of interest to CAP members.
Global News	Information about campaigns or developments concerning pornography and the sex industry around the world. We welcome submissions from readers (please state the source).
Fight Back	Information about campaigns or developments concerning violence against women in the UK.

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