



RECEIVED 30 DEC 1993

## FEMINISTS AGAINST CENSORSHIP

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Winter Update 1993-94

"I wrote a song about dental floss, but did it make anyone clean their teeth?"  
- Frank Zappa

We'd like to thank those of you who came to our Public Meeting, despite all the problems with the trains, for helping to make it a success. Oh, we had our usual run of logistical problems, and perhaps we tried to do too much, but in spite of everything, all the wonderful people who were involved made it come off rather well, we thought. And we took in enough at the door to be able to operate for another year.

We also hope you saw Isabel Koprowski's Open Space on BBC on 20 November, with Chad Varra of the Samaritans, David Baddiel of Baddiel & Newman (formerly the Mary Whitehouse Experience), Linzi Drew & Lindsay Honey, and of course Nettie & Avedon from FAC. It's the first time we've seen a positive look at porn on a feature length programme.

Meanwhile, Mary Whitehouse has retired.

As some of you may be aware, the government and its minions have been engaged in a major push against computer porn, announcing even more Draconian measures than were already in place in order to make it possible to snoop into your every fantasy. Science fictional fantasies of children down-loading feature length hard core porn movies onto their Game Boys are broadcast at least monthly on the television. The implication that teenage males may be (gasp!) masturbating is discussed with serious alarm. Do you have a right to privacy? Is masturbation a normal, healthy activity? Don't be daft!

The police, having figured out that paedophiles don't need "child porn" of the type they try to frighten us into believing is on every computer bulletin board, seem to be in the business of prosecuting just about any old picture of a child (because any old picture of a child is good enough for your average paedophile). A man is being prosecuted for having a photo of a child that he cut out of a copy of the Daily Mirror. Now they're punishing thought crime, you see.

Nude photos of children of any kind, no matter how innocent, can bring the police down on you. Professional family photographer Ron Oliver is being "investigated" for having taken studio portraits of children, some of whom were

naked in some pictures. Some of Oliver's clients are naturists, and of course this means the children have not been taught to feel ashamed of their bodies - but that's not how the police see it. They seized his lifetime's work because a tiny percentage of the photos showed nude children. The investigation was heralded in the Daily Mail as the discovery of a "child porn ring", and has meant that Oliver cannot travel to America, where much of his client base is, and therefore he cannot work. He fled his home in England with his wife and children for Holland, where he says he will remain to protect his family.

Parents have been investigated for taking pictures of their kids playing and then bringing the film to a local chemist to be developed. Their children may be asked disgusting and traumatizing questions by social workers to see if they are "abused". This is in itself child abuse. Girls who have been offered such "protection" by the authorities have real horror stories to tell about the way they are treated by police and social workers.

This is the truth behind those stories you read in the papers about how our valiant police have uncovered "child porn rings". The police pose a serious danger to children; isn't it time you wrote to your MP?

The Angle Gallery in Birmingham were showing the Sex Crimes exhibition that was put together in aid of the Spanner Campaign, as a result of which they have lost their venue, since the real estate agents that held their lease just didn't like the show. (Everyone's a critic...)

A conference on porn in Brighton inviting Campaign Against Pornography to speak was thinking about asking FAC as well, but someone told them, "Oh, no, they're funded by the pornographers." Funny, no one ever asks us if this is true. God knows there are days when we wish we did have all this funding from the porn trade... but alas, no one has seen fit to send us large sums of money.

Someone calling themselves the Cambridge Anarchists has been passing out a leaflet saying porn is a "our **biggest** media category- bigger than the mainstream film, record and video industry combined," and has "a front



organisation called Feminists against Censorship."

The only real fact in the leaflet is that, "The writings of this group are being promoted and distributed by AK Press and Freedom and are being sold in Housmans. Housmans and AK state that they approve of the writings."

We sent in our affiliation to the Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom and were told that "eyebrows were raised" when our forms came in, but we have been accepted. The women in CPBF are now apparently widely split on pornography - this is very good news, since they were strong promoters of anti-porn legislation and were involved in drafting the Primarolo (Location of Pornographic Materials) bill.

**NCCL/LIBERTY:** Current FAC representatives on the NCCL executive are Elizabeth Wilson, Roz Kaveney and Avedon Carol. FAC agreed that Avedon should stand again in the next election (in April) for FAC, and also that if Elizabeth chooses to stand again, we will endorse her. Roz was re-elected last year and will not have to stand again until 1995. If you have not already joined NCCL, please join so you can vote in the election. Call FAC (above number) or NCCL on (071) 403-3888 for info on how to join.

We also expect to be submitting resolutions to the AGM. If you are a member, you can attend and support us there, as well.

The "FUCK censorship" badges have proven to be so popular that we can hardly keep them in stock (still available for a pound, as are the "another feminist against censorship" badges). We now have Feminists Against Censorship tee-shirts - for £7.50 apiece (they'll look so nice with that badge, too).

**PORN:** For the last two years you've been able to get a heterosexual men's pin-up magazine that didn't have all those horrible captions and insulting editorial rubbish. Instead, Risque left all that out and had light think pieces from various women and men in and out of the trade, including Linzi Drew, Tuppy Owens, and even one from FAC. But now they've decided to go "down-market" and have hired a new editor who is going to make it look just as tacky as all the other magazines. Sigh....

Sexual revolutionary Betty Dodson has been teaching women about masturbation for decades, and now she's available on videotape with SelfLoving. FAC's reviewers say that there's

plenty of information here for all those women who haven't had much luck so far (all too many women have never had an orgasm), as well as handy tips for all. Men will get a kick out of it, too. Betty Dodson has always been a godsend to women. Phone Blue Moon on (0959) 572756 to find out how to get a copy.

A new adult magazine, CX (for Certificate X) has announced impending publication.

Does anyone know anything about a group called CHANGE, who were spouting off anti-pornography rhetoric at the otherwise excellent NCCL civil liberties conference? No one seems to have heard of them before.

**BOOKS:** A new version of I, Claudia is out, incorporating both of her two previous pamphlets. She hasn't relented in seeing all feminists as censorious, though, and has slipped in a dig at FAC (despite the fact that she says privately that she liked our book).

Pleasure Principles: Politics, Sexuality and Ethics, edited by Victoria Harwood, David Oswell, Kay Parkinson and Anna Ward (FAC member), includes material by Avedon Carol, Sue Golding, Della Grace, Naomi Salaman (with Penis Envy photo spread) and Anna Marie Smith, and is out from Lawrence & Wishart.

Definitely recommended: Speaking of Sex, by Antony Grey is out by Cassell - good stuff. He sent a copy to Edwina Curry because of her history of giving lip-service to gay rights, and received an abusive letter in reply. He wrote back saying she ought to read the book before she condemns it.

**TESSA BOFFIN** was a lively, talented and original activist and FAC member. She took pictures, set up exhibitions and made books - Stolen Glances with Jean Fraser and Ecstatic Antibodies with Sunil Gupta. She helped bring FAC to Cambridge. She took her own life at the end of October, and will be sorely missed.

**Warning:** The number next to your name on the mailing label refers to the number of mailings you are paid up for (including this one). An "x" means this is your last mailing unless you send another fiver. (Additional donations are always welcome, of course.)

*Happy New Year!*