



RECEIVED 10 AUG 1994

## Feminists Against Censorship

BM Box 207, London, WC1N 3XX (081) 552-4405

### SUMMER UPDATE 1994

**SUMMER FUN:** We've been hot, sweaty, and very busy. And we finally got to speak in Brighton. We've been trying to do this for years, but whenever anyone suggested that FAC should be invited to speak at a meeting on pornography, someone always said, "Oh, no, they're funded by the pornographers!" and that was the end of that. But this time when Do Tongues asked Campaign Against Pornography to debate us and they refused, the event was held anyway with FAC members alone on the platform and the organizers made sure that the local media knew CAP had refused to debate. The CAP spokeswoman, Penny Iverson, told the press that our members were "making millions" in the porn industry. We spoke to a packed house that was very receptive to FAC—but not to the CAP members who showed up with a prepared speech to read from the floor. They laughed appreciatively when we explained that the claims about our abundant wealth were based on the fact that Isabel Koprowski, a former editor at the *Penthouse* (UK) group, Northern & Shell, was a FAC member (although she joined the group well after it was formed and has never taken part in making FAC policy). How much money do these people imagine editors make? Niki Wolf of FAC asked the audience, "Why would British pornographers give money to FAC? We want to abolish the Obscene Publications Acts, and that would ruin their market." The CAP members had trouble believing all this, and continued to grill us on our *personal* sources of income. They still seemed to think Isabel was giving us large sums of money. "Until this year," Avedon Carol told them, "The largest donation we had ever received was for £50. It was from my lover. He's a computer programmer."

When a free-lancer writing for *Melody Maker* interviewed Penny Iverson for comments on the pornography section of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, he found her position so revolting that he felt the need to phone FAC for confirmation that he wasn't crazy, although he had already spoken to us earlier. We assured him that feeling desire for his girlfriend did not make him a rapist. Iverson later called him back just to abuse him and libel FAC, claiming that our book, *Bad Girls & Dirty Pictures*, says that a four-year-old girl is ready for intercourse with an adult male. We told him we'd heard this one before from the so-called Cambridge Anarchists (along with their claim that the book also advocates sex with *donkeys!*).

Another journalist who interviewed both FAC and the weirdly named Campaign Against Pornography & Censorship's Catherine Itzin called later to tell us that he'd received a letter from Itzin afterward sent to "inform" him that our book advocates intergenerational sex and bestiality. He asked for our response, and we said, "It's malicious libel." For those who haven't read it—like Catherine Itzin—our book condemns the fact that sex between people only a few months apart in age, if they are on opposite sides of the age of consent, is a crime and can expose young people to criminal action; we do not mention animals *at all*. And we never, ever *advocate* any particular sexuality. To us, this just confirms what is already suggested by her "scientific" citations: that Itzin doesn't actually bother to read the sources she cites.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL:** Has been delayed; now expected to pass in October. The language on adult porn has not been removed. The new, added language says: The BBFC



"must have regard for suitable role models" for children, and members of the public will be able to sue the BBFC (possibly with legal aid for judicial review) if they think they're too soft. It will be an imprisonable offence to sell restricted materials to those under 18. The penalties for child porn (of any kind) are increased from a fine and three months to six months in prison. (When David Alton talks about "appropriate role models", remember, he means *no gays*.)

The BBFC is currently refusing to classify new materials until the law is passed.

We encourage our supporters to send letters and submissions to Lord McIntosh, the Labour leader in the Lords, who is very active against the bill and probably sympathetic to our position.

"LIBERTY"/NCCL: NCCL has recently put out, and is still working on, several reports on civil liberties issues, including the reports on women and on gay and transgendered people, already published. They are now working on one on "disabled people" (horrible, insulting term). The author of all of these reports is a heterosexual man, and it shows. There's nothing in the women's report about abortion, and the issue of women's works being censored is pretty much ignored. Freedom of expression is mostly reduced to concerns about images in pornography and whether this qualifies as "hate speech".

The reports are being produced in concert with other groups—the women's report was with Southall Black Sisters and Change. The latter group seems to be a new anti-porn group that has published the work of Catherine Itzin. They are otherwise unknown and it isn't clear why they were asked to participate; it's hardly as if they have the credibility of the other groups who have participated, and more importantly, their position is one that is entirely in opposition to NCCL policy. FAC wrote to the General Secretary, Andrew Puddephatt, and suggested we should be a participating group in the freedom of expression report, as we actually wrote NCCL's policy opposing sexual censorship and this would go some way to balancing the inclusion of Change in the women's report.

(Note: The National Council for Civil Liberties is still the official name of the organization; "Liberty" is just a nickname. Publications that refer to it as "Liberty, formerly the National Council for Civil Liberties," are incorrect.)

BOOKS: Our new book, *Nudes, Prudes and Attitudes*, will be out in September from New Clarion (see enclosed), and we have just started work on a new book for AK Press called *Tales From the Clitoris*. The latter will contain essays by a variety of women talking about their own experiences of and with pornography.

T-SHIRTS: Black FAC t-shirts are available in small and large sizes, at £7.50 (add £2.00 if you are asking to have them posted). They look good. White t-shirts are still available in extra-large for the same price.

BADGES: "FUCK censorship" badges are available for £1 apiece; we will soon be getting in more "another feminist against censorship" badges at the same price.

SM PRIDE: On 24 September, a march will begin at 11:00 AM at Marble Arch, culminating in the SM Day School at the University of North London Union (Malet Street), which will start at 2:00. FAC will lead a censorship workshop there.

A USEFUL SERVICE: We don't normally do advertising, but we are definitely into *books*. For those out-of-print books we have so much trouble finding (and some of the best books *are* out of print, we have found to our chagrin), FAC-friendly TSB BOOKSEARCH at 17 Gilbert Road, London SW19 1BP (or call (081) 543-0898) might just get you what you need.

Remember: If there is an (x) by your name on the envelope, your subscription has run out.