

sex and sensuality for women and men
desire

Ted Goodman / Campaign Against Censorship

16 August '96

Dear Ted

You may have heard the news today about the latest police attempts to censor the Internet.

What is disturbing is that the OPS was ostensibly disbanded as they claimed they were taking no further interest in explicit material depicting straight sex between consenting adults. And instead, they claimed they were going to channel their energies into curbing kiddy porn. This at least was the official policy.

In fact, at a recent meeting for the publishing trade, the police suggested that it would not be appropriate at present to prosecute images even portraying penetration.

Yet now it seems that the Club & Vice Squad (!?) is pressurising the Internet Service Providers into outlawing porn on the Net by calling on them to use self-regulation/self-censorship by suggesting the Service Providers are themselves publishers (which they're not!) and so liable to prosecution. Most Service Providers will not be familiar with the OPA and may well be intimidated by these moves.

I've enclosed copies of the letter from the Met (detailing the 'banned' Newsgroups, most of which you'll see are certainly *not* child porn) plus some e-mail background correspondence and a Web site with some of the implications.

It's quite complex stuff and for that reason the police might well be able to make some headway here with minimal opposition. Most of the debate we've heard so far is ill-informed as the subject is quite technical and few are equipped with the proper understanding to raise the right questions.

We feel that an objection should be registered. On whose authority are the police acting? Is there some fighting over territory within the Met between the OPS and the Club & Vice Squad? Why clamp down on such items as masturbation, breasts, centrefolds, etc and group it together with the paedophile stuff? Most of the police statements are about porn in general, and not paedophile material.

We don't want to just dump this on you, but feel you should know and we can provide you with the ammunition (technical and otherwise).

Best wishes



Ian Jackson & Lesley Ann Sharrock

cc David Webb / NCROPA