



market. Perhaps the threats to internal law and order by the restive majorities in the G-7 countries will give a boost to the arms and security industries, helping to bring

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tives; (2) we are a movement comprised of two members: legal theorist Catherine MacKinnon and writer Andrea Dworkin; (3) we advocate censorship; (4) we are all anti-sex; (5) we support "dangerous" legislation that hurts feminists, gays, and lesbians.

Anti-pornography feminists have never aligned themselves with the right's agenda. Right-wing conservatives want women home and pregnant while the male left wants women flat on their backs with their legs spread. Neither agenda appeals to anti-pornography feminists, who work for an end to sexual and racial inequality and white male supremacy.

The media loves to reduce us to a movement of two people. Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon are, for many of us, the celebrated leaders of this movement because of their years of brilliant, theoretical and political work. Pro-pornographers assume that by dragging these women's lives and works through unheard of media smut—somehow we will all go away. In reality, the anti-pornography movement is a determined movement of millions of women and men nationally and internationally who are working on every level possible to

help the public understand the consequences of our culture's addiction to pornographic images and to expose the fact that real people are being hurt through the making and distribution of pornography. Pornography, for many of us, is a form of hate propaganda designed to keep women subordinate to men; it is also a system of sexual exploitation for profit that targets women for rape, battery, and harassment.

A primary frustration for anti-pornography feminists is the difficulty of trying to get people to acknowledge the harm done to women, children, and men through the pornography industry. The majority of women who appear in pornography are also prostitutes and have been sexually abused as children. They are poor and 90 percent would leave the business if they could. Pornography is also controlled by organized crime where force and violence are standard business practice. In a setting like this it is impossible to know if the majority of these women are freely choosing to be photographed and pimped.

Anti-pornography feminists are part of a human rights movement that seeks to have women's human rights recognized on a global level. We want the abuse of women that is condoned through social custom and legal jurisdiction to be seen as the political terrorism it is. Horrifying numbers of women are being beaten, raped, murdered, tortured, abused, and kidnapped. The numbers are not dropping. Our society's denial of what should represent a public health emergency is an affront to women's human rights and serves to protect the pornographers.

Anti-pornography feminists are more staunchly anti-censorship than those who seek to silence them. Apologists for the porn industry who scream about censors have distorted the meaning of censorship and silenced any real debate. Meanwhile, the real issue of stopping violence against women fades into non-existence. We do not believe that pornographers and pimps



Current
Debate

Slandering Anti-Pornography Feminists

By Ann Stmonton

Every media pundit from the left, right and middle along with so called "anti-censorship" groups loves to slander anti-pornography feminists. These attacks, based on lies and distortions, have been repeated so often they have become media "facts." In their standard refrain they claim that: (1) we are aligned with right-wing conserva-

information and imagery would be free of sexism, racism, and homophobia. The celebratory and spiritual aspects of love making have all but been erased in a culture where sex is defined by pornographers who hawk an increasingly narrow and violent version of male sexual fantasy.

The myth that we are all prudes has been permanently tattooed on us by the media's rewriting of Dworkin and MacKinnon's analysis of sexual violence. According to these media hysterics both women believe every act of heterosexual sex is rape and all sex is forced. Neither woman is ever actually quoted as saying this because they have never said it. Critiquing the status of human sexual relations is never easy in a world of gender inequality where such enormous financial interest is vested in keeping women subordinate. The media's outrage is curiously similar to white plantation owners in the antebellum South furious that anyone might dare suggest their slaves were anything but perfectly content.

Many of us have diverse—and even conflicting—ideas about educational and legislative reforms that might begin to curb the flood of pornographic images in our culture. Yet many believe that the enactment of the civil human rights law—developed by Dworkin and MacKinnon—that would allow women and men to sue those that have harmed them is both innovative and promising. Unlike a criminal law where police could come in and grab their version of "obscenity," this civil rights law puts the burden of proof of harm on the plaintiff. Only after the arduous process to prove injury would the pornographers have to pay for the harms they have caused. The enactment of this ordinance, along with educational campaigns to re-sensitize our culture concerning the effects of media images, could mean that media producers and advertisers would no longer have to sell

programs, cars, and beer using the pornographer's rules.

NCAC director Katz's accusations that the *Butler* decision is responsible for Canadian Custom's discriminatory seizures is spreading quickly. In February 1992 the Canadian Supreme Court unanimously joined in a new interpretation of obscenity law that defined pornography from a feminist point of view. According to *Butler*, material that shows sex with actual violence, uses children, or is degrading and dehumanizing to women (i.e. that shows women enjoying pain, humiliation, cruel and violent bondage, or sexualized racism) is to be considered harmful to women's safety and equality. *Butler* allows for explicit sex and offers generous protection to any artistic expression.

Immediately after *Butler*, Toronto police raided a gay bookstore, seized the lesbian S/M magazine, *Bad Attitude* (that has a Canadian circulation of 40) charged it in court under *Butler* because it contained sex between a young girl and a nurse-caretaker. Canadian Customs officers admit they don't understand the new harms-based definition of porn embodied in *Butler*. The police and the Canadian Customs have an inexcusable history of using discriminatory practices against gay and lesbian bookstores well before *Butler*. According to MacKinnon who helped argue *Butler* to the Court, "In legal fact, it was easier to use Canada's obscenity law oppressively, including against gay and lesbian materials, before *Butler* than after it. Under *Butler* it is illegal for Customs to seize materials because they are gay or lesbian. Under prior Canadian law, it was legal."

In a discussion against gun control, it would be bizarre not to mention the harm guns do to people. Yet, when anyone suggests controlling pornography and documents the harm done to people, the "censor" label is used to gag further discussion. Any consumer product that

was proven as harmful as pornography would never win widespread support.

The underlying problem continues to be the fact that women's lives are cheap and expendable. When prostitutes are killed the numbers have to be in the double digits for an official investigation to take place. Pornography and other property rights take precedence over women's lives and women's safety. Pornography is deemed more important than the women who are trampled in the wake of this 10 billion dollar a year industry.

Exposing the lies that pornography spreads about women will never win popularity contests. It is our challenge to summon the courage to continue the fight for women's dignity and integrity in a society where bigotry and contempt for women is celebrated daily. Z



Court Report

Speech May Be Free, But It Isn't Cheap

By Steven Hill

On January 12, 1994 the U.S. Supreme Court took a plunge down the information superhighway. The Justices heard opening arguments in *Turner Broadcasting System v. Federal Communications Commission* about whether the cable industry's free speech rights are being trampled by a 1992 federal law that requires cable systems to set aside up to one third of their channels for local broadcasts. As telecommunications technologies like cable TV, the telephone, and the computer merge, billions of dollars in profits are at stake. The ca-

