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"Comment"  
Channel 4 TV

Earlier this week a group of women led by Clare Short removed certain magazines from a well known newsagent - the ones you'll find on the top shelf.

Why do these women object to these magazines? As I understand it it's because they show naked women. What's wrong with that? I work for one of these magazines and I can't see any harm in it.

People such as Clare Short say they find these pictures offensive and degrading to women. Well, we live in a society where it is not acceptable for one group to suppress the freedoms of another merely because they find it offensive.

A good example of this is one minority's attempt to suppress Salman Rushdie's book Satanic Verses. Do you want to live in a society where any minority can dictate to the majority?

I find magazines which glorify war offensive. That doesn't mean I want to stop people buying them. I just won't buy them myself.

In this country we don't ban things just because some people find them offensive. So they have to resort to the argument that these magazines lead to sexual violence.

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I have yet to see one shred of evidence for this assertion.  
Let's deal with the facts, not opinions.

First, most of you will have seen this type of magazine at least once, and I'm sure your health and sanity has not been affected.

Secondly, the evidence from countries which have liberalized ~~the availability of pornography~~ ~~Denmark is the obvious example~~ shows that the incidence of sexual crime has fallen. So society as a whole doesn't appear to have been criminalized by pornography.

Thirdly, and perhaps most powerfully of all, sexual crime existed long before magazines were thought of. Did the Romans rape the Sabine women because they'd seen a copy of Penthouse? No! I guess they did it because they were frustrated.

I would argue that if adult magazines had been available in those day, they'd have relieved their frustrations without committing rape. They'd have had a good time with the magazines instead. I believe that pornography is a good thing. It relieves sexual frustration for men and women, and often enhances lovemaking. And don't forget, pornography is a form of safer sex. No one ever got AIDS from looking at a magazine.

~~etc~~

Let me make it clear that I do not support pornography that uses children or physical harm. But the anti - pornography <sup>brigade</sup> ~~claim~~ that pictures of naked women leads to rape is a red herring.

If you're fed up with "them" telling "us" how to live, don't let them take magazine off your newsagent's shelves. If it's girlie magazines today, it could be D H Lawrence tomorrow.