

OZ OBSCENITY TRIAL

The OZ Obscenity Show begins at the Old Bailey on or about June 22nd. The editors, Jim Anderson, Felix Dennis and Richard Neville face charges of publishing an obscene magazine (max penalty 3 years), sending indecent publications through the post (max penalty one year) and the absurd, archaic and rarely used count of "conspiring . . . to produce a Magazine containing divers, lewd indecent and sexually perverted articles, cartoons, drawings and illustrations with intent thereby to debauch and corrupt the morals of young children and young persons within the Realm and to arouse and implant in their minds lustful and perverted desires . . ." This flattering assessment of the ability of OZ to affect the way people think or behave carries a maximum penalty which is entirely at the discretion of the judge.

But while it is OZ on trial at the Old Bailey, it is in fact an entire community which is being prosecuted. If you care about your freedom to think, communicate and experiment, if you care about freedom of the press, freedom to live the life you wish, then you also are in the dock.

Up until recently we had greeted the harassment of OZ with only sporadic bursts of seriousness, as had many of our friends. It was instinctively assumed that we could ultimately establish in a court that OZ did not deprave and corrupt — even if it meant redefining the whole concept of obscenity. Notwithstanding the perpetual ransacking of our offices, we were aware that in less enlightened communities we would have been automatically goaled. But it has finally dawned upon us that the authorities in this country take our publishing venture more seriously than we do. We discovered that the police had been watching our houses for some time and they virtually admitted to tapping our phones and keeping dossiers on trivial little known facts of our personal lives. So while the fearful significance of the OZ persecution has become belatedly apparent to ourselves, many people are still more amused than amazed. The pick-axing of this magazine is nothing less than political censorship. OZ has relentlessly promoted some elements of the new culture — dope, rock 'n' roll and fucking in the streets; it is the only magazine in this country to consistently and constructively analyse the tension between the freak/drop-out community and the militant left and to struggle to develop a theory from such antagonism. We see fun, flippancy, guiltless sex and the permanent strike of dropping out as part of an emerging new community, but painfully acknowledge the limitations of leeching on the present society and becoming stooges of its consumer junkyism. We appreciate that OZ antics are often adventurist, escapist, dilettantish, narcissistic and juvenile; but we are congenitally incapable of facing a solemn fun free future, cutting cane beneath some spartan banner of liberation; we

want only to play with our toys, not own them, and we are fumbling towards a solution of living and working collectively — not for profit — which there ain't — but because we love what we do and believe naively in a joyful tomorrow of spiritual, emotional and intellectual coitus non interruptus.

But still we are afraid. An endless avalanche of support is necessary for us to win the court case. Not just the urgent money (make cheques payable to the OZ Obscenity Fund) but moral encouragement as well. Write letters to newspapers, to your MP, do everything to make the public aware of the importance of the issues involved. Help whiplash the backlash. For while religiously executed, it is politically motivated.

Approximately 30 people have already agreed to give evidence on OZ's behalf. This means the case will probably play for at least a giddy three weeks. Any other willing expert witnesses, such as school teachers, authors, psychiatrists, educationists, child welfare officers etc who have not yet been cast for a part in the OZ drama, please contact our solicitor, David Offenbach at 01-629 1191.

We have been cheered by the opening of an OZ Obscenity Centre at 39A Pottery Lane, Holland Park. The organisers plan to provide news and information relating to the trial, as well as co-ordinate protests, rallies demonstrations and other events which are being planned to coincide with the trial.

The eunuch prime minister and his repressed harem of cabinet ministers have created a climate which is stifling every new expression of sexual freedom. Help OZ win at the Old Bailey or you may never wank in peace again.

