

WESTCHESTER WOMEN'S LIBERATION COALITION

A STATEMENT OF POLICY AND HISTORY - 1971

HOW IT ALL BEGAN HERE

Women's Liberation in Westchester started in the village of Croton-on-Hudson in February, 1970. A group of four friends came together to discuss the new phenomena that they had been reading about in the above ground and underground newspapers. Women in the various radical movements had been opting out and developing their own organization for their own rights. Too often in the new left, civil-rights and political organizations women were asked to do the work of workers but not to be policy makers. Women were to type and file and make coffee and make love but not to have leadership positions. We discussed this development in our meeting and decided that the new movement for women's rights and liberation had relevance for suburban women as well as "radical" women.

We called several subsequent meetings and at each meeting the number of women attending increased. We came to the conclusion that the most effective number of people for a meeting is no larger than 15. If more than 15 come to a meeting it is a good idea to split into two groups, both of which will be affiliated with the larger overall organization, Westchester Women's Liberation Coalition.

Women who have come to meetings are interested in working on a variety of matters pertaining to their social, legal and economic rights. Certain themes have come up repeatedly. In a general sense, our aim is to destroy the double standard not only as men use it against us but as we use it against ourselves. We want to discourage women from constantly trying to live up to a false image of what they should be, an image derived from parents, friends, cultural mythology and the media. We would like to see women refrain from ignoring their own inclinations and abilities, refrain from squeezing themselves into roles others have selected for them. We want it established once and for all that just as not all men are suited for the role of doctor or lawyer, so all women are not suited by interest or ability for the role of wife and mother, certainly not of wife and mother to the exclusion of any other current running within her. When society demeans women who aren't mothers, it demeans motherhood as well. A mother becomes someone not doing a job for which she has talent but rather some mass-produced item doing the job a machine society fashioned her for.

From discussions in our meetings, we have decided on the following aims for our organization: to become a source of information and idea-exchange for suburban women who are often cut off from both the advantages of rural life and the easy involvement and new ideas of city life. To work for legislation pertinent to women's rights, specifically at this time for the

repeal of all abortion laws on a nation-wide basis; tax reform to allow women to deduct household help from their declared income; the equal rights amendment; anti-discrimination laws to ensure that women have a chance at those jobs which they find themselves suited for but which have been denied to them because of sexism (equivalent to and as insidious as racism).

We want to join with other groups in working to establish a standard of equal pay for equal work, state supported day-care centers, and to participate together in actions (boycotts, picketing against those corporations, agencies and media which deliberately perpetuate an image of women which is false, degrading and self-serving).

As quoted in the Croton Women's Liberation Newsletter: "We say that the liberation of women to be ourselves will free our men as well to be what they need to be. That the death of the Consumer Princess will bring the death of the Technocrat Cavalier. That maybe when we no longer have to prove our feminity by feigning submissiveness, men will not have to prove their masculinity by going to war. We submit that the task of saving the future calls for all the resources of our humanity, rather than for an artificial restraint in the name of femininity." We have got to overcome the conditioned repressions within ourselves and fight the obstacles a male chauvanist society sets in our paths. Right On! Sisterhood is powerful!

NEW GROUPS ORGANIZE

From the original nucleus of women in Croton, new groups have been rapidly forming. In communities throughout Westchester and Putnam, individual groups are working on the various projects related to Women's Liberation. There are consciousness raising groups, study groups and action groups -- all trying to change women's lives in our society and to open up new options for women. The Westchester Women's Liberation Coalition was formed as a liaison organization in order to bring the diverse smaller groups together for common purposes. The Coalition represents a way in which women from all over the County can communicate with each other, exchange information and ideas, work together and support each other. The Coalition publishes a newsletter and sends women into the community to speak to various groups on women's liberation. There is also a literature collective which encourages women to write their own material and also publishes and sells women's liberation articles. There are groups working on abortion reform, employment problems, legislative action, increased child care centers and the image of women in our society. All women are welcome to join us. We need each other for all the support we can get and to help liberate all women.

If you are interested in becoming active in Women's Liberation and would like further information about groups in your area, complete the following form and return to Westchester Women's Liberation Coalition, P.O. Box 9, Hartsdale, New York 10530.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/TOWN, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____

I am interested in working on or finding out about the following projects:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| _____ ABORTION | _____ LITERATURE COLLECTIVE |
| _____ CHILD CARE | _____ NEWSLETTER COLLECTIVE |
| _____ CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING | _____ LEGISLATIVE COLLECTIVE |
| _____ EMPLOYMENT | _____ SPEAKERS BUREAU COLLECTIVE |
| _____ IMAGE OF WOMEN | _____ STUDY GROUPS |

OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR COALITION ACTION _____

