letter to the anti-rape movement

This is an open letter to the anti-rape movement. We, the members of Santa Cruz Women Against Rape, are writing this letter because we have come to realize that the direction the anti-rape movement is taking is not helpful. While we have many common, shared goals which are expressed in this letter, we believe it is important to address the issue of the relationship of the anti-rape movement to the rape crisis system. The reasons we are interested in this issue have a lot to do with how we see ourselves as a Women Against Rape group. We are a political organization that focuses on the issue of rape and violence against women, and that is working towards the long range goal of a radical transformation of the very basis of society. We do not believe that rape can end within the present capitalist, racist, and sexist structure of our society. The fight against rape has not yet been waged simultaneously with the fight against all forms of oppression.

When the organized movement against rape first started about five years ago, most of the anti-rape groups were collectives of feminists, who came together because of their anger at the way the police and the courts treated rape victims. These groups (and ours was among them) were primarily political. We were critical of the police, the courts, and the hospitals, the institutions that traditionally dealt with rape victims. Their awful treatment of women became a topic in the media, largely due to the efforts of the women's movement against rape. In a sexoholoning fashion, every other anti-rape groups formed. Many of these groups are here today because they consider themselves political, or even feminist. They considered themselves service groups, who wanted to "help rape victims". They felt that the criminal justice system and the anti-rape movement had a contract, the "protest ratioff the street". Therefore, these groups tended to encourage or cajole women to report rapes to the police.

The more explicitly political groups were frustrated, both by the ineffectiveness and unresponsiveness of the criminal justice system, and because of the increasing rape rate. While many remained critical of the criminal justice system in theory, most groups felt it was important to work on building or improving relationships with the police and other criminal justice agencies. They hoped that this would lead to the prevention of rape, and in the form of a political community and based on support from the government, the rape would be a public issue, so that these women would lose their anonymity, and so women could be warned of particular men.

We try to create the consciousness in people that they should report to a police station or a call for report to a lawyer, and that they should go to a woman's aid if it looks like she's being hassled.

We print the descriptions of men who rape, has an idea of what they do so that rape will become a public issue, so that these men will lose their anonymity, and so women can be warned of particular men.

4. Confrontations of rapists, etc. by women (or women and men). The message we want to present to the public is, we know who they are and what they did, that they are responsible for their actions, and that they have the responsibility to change. We try to offer follow up re-education by anti-rape men. Although we think that each individual confrontation is important, we hope that each one will have the more widespread effect of encouraging people to force men to stop violent and anti-woman behavior. This means that people have to deal with the men close to them--their family, friends, etc., as well as with stranger who has sex with them.

Confrontations can be good for women who have been raped or hassled because they allow her to be active and powerful in her response to her behavior. She can make the decision about how a confrontation is going to happen and what she'd like to see. We can help her get together a group of women who will be supportive to her during this process. This is very different from reporting a rape to the police. The police role is a passive one (as a witness for the state) and others make decisions about the investigation. We can help her to make decisions about the experience on her own. For more information about confrontations.

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sweeping away the myths

Another concern of ours is the lack of the development of anti-racist politics and practice in the anti-rape movement. Historically, rape has been a tool used against Third World people. The sexist myth that women "ask" and lie about rape is applied many times more to all Third World women than it is to White women. Black women have been forced to rape by White men from slavery up to the present. For society has never given them any protection. In addition, rape was a primary weapon used against women in the genocidal campaign against Native American women. The myth that most rapists are Black men has had enormous consequences for them. Thousands of Black men have been lynched or legally executed because they "looked at a White woman wrong." Of the 450000 reports for rape, 40% of these men were Black. It is crucial that anti-rape groups fight the racist myths, stereotypes, and institutions that are associated with rape. We realize that this is the first step in this process that is to stop such an atmosphere of criminal justice system, because no matter what our intentions are, the system is racist through and through. We suggest that the movement in the People's Republic of China. From all evidence and reports, rape has ended or is exceedingly rare there. It was ended through a revolutionary process that changed the men, women, and the material conditions simultaneously. We strongly encourage everyone to read "Goldflower's Story" by Jack Belden, a pamphlet that deals with this problem as it occurred in China.

to explain that which should never have to be explained

Two quarters ago I took the men and sexism class with Joe Ferrandino and Warren Farrel's book, The Liberated Man, I ended the course with a position paper that renounced the whole idea of women's liberation, calling it, "the struggle for more struggle." Why? Because it in no way challenges the fact the for thousands of years men have lived at the expense of women. It continues to be socially, emotionally and psychically parasitic and exploiting. In no way do they challenge the fact that the male role is entirely predicated on the existence of women. In no way do they challenge the institutions that perpetuate, feed on, and exist because of women's oppression (e.g. church, capitalism, marriage, the state, education, etc.). In short, men's liberation deals with the real issue—women's oppression and how men oppress women. Rather, it focuses on a deliberately irrelevant issue—how to change the "hurt" men. This is a large and deeply and incredibly frightened they are.

Thus realizing how dangerous men's lib is to women's struggle, I felt compelled to attend the presentation by Farrel in the ballroom of USF on April 21 (1976). Following his hour and a half lecture, I initiated the question/answer period by asking him, "To what extent does your program help reconcile the powers and privileges of the male role?" I wanted to know what he had done to stop oppressing women, and to end women's oppression. Rather than answering this question directly, he put it to the audience. Receiving no response, he prefaced his answer by saying, "I don't agree with your definition of power and privilege." Since I in no way defined these terms in my question, I realized immediately此后我的回答和我的回答是，因为他毫利巧妙地利用了观众对不无——如他所称的——他离开并加入了一个组去研究这个力量，因为社会中的性关系只有在社会中的形式是独身的。在我们的研究中，我们感兴趣的是发展探索的。没有写信者，特别是与那些群体和个体，他们感兴趣于在探索中。然而不感兴趣于在写信中。