

WOMEN AGAINST RAPE



Open discussion meetings

W.A.R. is now holding regular open discussion meetings on the last Monday of every month -

Sept. 25th 'Organising against Rape'

Speaker from Women Against Rape Bristol

Oct. 30th 'Violence in Marriage'

Speaker from Women Against Rape Bristol

Nov. 27th 'At the Job'

Speakers from the English Collective of Prostitutes and W.A.R.

Jan. 29th 'Rape & Immigrant Women'

Speaker from Black Women for Wages for Housework

Feb. 26th 'The Law, The Police & The Courts'

Speaker from Women Against Rape London

8 p.m at The Folk House, 40 Park St.

Women Only Meetings - All Women Welcome
Bar Coffee

Women Against Rape Bristol 422810

Women Against Rape Open Meeting Violence in Marriage.

Please see enclosed leaflet.

There will be two speakers at this meeting:

Katrina Jones, 62 years old from ^{W.A.R.} Bristol will be talking about how for the past 20 years she has lived through a physically and mentally violent marriage and faced continuous rape by her husband. Having been forced to take full time employment outside the home since her child reached school, both because her husband was often unemployed and because he didn't give her enough money when he was employed, she is now disabled with arthritis, confirmed by her doctor as caused mainly by overwork and overstrain. She has now decided to leave her husband and the violent marriage.

"When a husband keeps his wife short of money so that she has to ask for every penny for herself, this is the greatest violence in marriage" Katrina says.

The Liberty Life Assurance Company has called this 'financial battering' and their recent survey shows that three out of four women in marriages do not have a penny to call our own.

Solveig Francis from Housewives in Dialogue [redacted] will be talking about the case of Joan Lesley White who, having left her marriage where she was being beaten and raped by her husband, was forced through lack of money and housing to put her three children in the care of Camden Council. Having found a home for them all she then had to face a three year battle with the Local Authority who wanted her to return to her marriage, to get her children out of care again. Working with Housewives in Dialogue Joan Lesley White won the custody of her children earlier this year.

The current proposed changes in the Social Security laws which would make it more difficult to live on Social Security, and so more difficult for women to leave intolerable marriages, are a further discipline by the government on women to endure the many kinds of violence which we face within marriage.

The Press are not invited to this meeting but for any further information contact Caroline Barker Tel 422810

The Law, the Police and the Courts. (See enclosed leaflet.)

The main speaker at this meeting will be Ruth Hall, national spokeswoman for Women Against Rape, who has appeared on radio and television and in the press innumerable times and was most recently seen on a BBC 'Man Alive' programme on rape at the end of January. Ruth Hall has already led a deputation to the Home Office, meeting with Mr. Brynmor John, Under Secretary of State for the Home Office, and will be presenting the evidence for Women Against Rape nationally to the Criminal Law Revision Committee now reviewing the laws around sexual offences. This review is long overdue:

At a time when a 14 year old girl is raped in Bristol by three men and the police refuse to bring rape charges against any of them although one is from Clifton. A less serious charge of unlawful sexual intercourse and abduction was brought against one man only, who got away with a three month sentence. This, after the girl had been through long hours of humiliating police questioning without her parents present. The family have now come to Women Against Rape.

At a time when a 9 year old girl is abducted from Victoria Park, Ashton and 'assaulted'. Horrified mothers ask Women Against Rape why this is called 'assault' by the police and not rape.

At a time when, as Black Women For Wages for Housework has made clear, the police cannot spare forces to find the city's rapists but can boast of their vice and riot squads and their 'clean-up' operations of prostitutes and youths; which is a well-known excuse to harrass and arrest innocent black people, prostitute women and white youths who live on the impoverished council housing estates - especially St. Paul's.

At a time when rape in marriage in this country is quite legal and where violence of a man towards his wife is so acceptable that a man can kill his young wife of three months (Evening Post, 9.11.78) and the judge in passing sentence remark that it is repugnant to him to have to sentence a young man of hitherto good character to a sentence of five years. That violence in the marriage was not isolated. The husband had previously blackened both his wife's eyes and broken her nose.

At a time when a judge sitting in a rape case refused to allow four people who had seen the BBC 'Man Alive' programme on rape to sit on the jury because they would be 'biased' as a result of the programme. A new jury was chosen and the rapist was acquitted. (News of the World, Feb. 1979)

Ruth Hall says 'This is in line with the bias of judges in their conduct of rape cases who in so doing condone and encourage the crime of rape.'

Ruth Hall will be available for interviews from 3 pm on Feb. 26th.

The press is not invited to the meeting.

For further information contact Caroline Barker Tel 422810
or 422116.

Women Against Rape holds Avon County Council responsible for the fact that many women are being assaulted and raped every week in and around Bristol through the totally inadequate provision of street lighting. Most cases are not reported because women know about the police' and court's attitude towards us.

Women in Avon cannot afford to wait for two years for improvements in street lighting as is Avon's present programme. We can't afford to pay for Avon's lack of funds, with rape and the constant fear of rape when we go out at night.

Women Against Rape are to meet Avon Councillors on the Planning and Highways Committee which is responsible for providing street lighting, including the Chairman, Councillor W. Mather Bell at 9.30am in Avon House on July 20th for the purpose of discussing overall improvements in street lighting in and around Bristol.

Our organisation believes that well lit streets would help discourage rape. It is essential for women to be able to go out at night safely, not only to enjoy ourselves and for educational purposes, but because many women have to work at night. This may entail shift work in hospitals and factories and women also have regular evening or night jobs as office cleaners, prostitutes, bar staff, night club staff. Black women especially are often forced to take evening and night work and are particularly at risk.

Being at home during the day, perhaps with children, women are entitled to entertainment in the evenings and may want to go out to the cinema or the theatre for example without a male escort. But we are in danger of rape in unlit or badly lit streets as are lesbian women who even when accompanied by friends can be harassed by would be rapists.

The absence of adequate public lighting make the disabled and senior citizens easy targets. For instance a deaf woman would not even know she was being followed and like those with other physical but maybe unseen problems, has no chance of getting away.

Most women cannot afford cars, public transport fares in Bristol are exorbitant with evening services reduced, so we are constantly obliged to walk along dark streets at night vulnerable to rape and always in fear.

The question of street lighting is not seen as important because it seems, Avon Council doesn't consider the safety of women as important. It is their responsibility to provide street lighting which is adequate for the safety of ourselves and our children. Let the money not come from increased rates but from the Home Office which is responsible for the safety of all women and children as for all people.

Women can contact our organisation by phone or letter where they know of any specific streets which need improved lighting. Either write to Women Against Rape, 150 Richmond Rd, Bristol 6 or telephone Bristol 422810, 677917 or 652273.

For further information contact Caroline Barker 422810

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Women Against Rape Bristol..... January 1979

Meetings

Enclosed is the leaflet about the open meetings at the Folk House. They have so far been very successful, women of all ages have come along and we've had excellent discussions. The meetings will be continuing all through this year so if anyone has suggestion for anything in particular you want discussed please let us know. On January 29th Norma Steele of Black Women for Wages for Housework will be speaking on Immigrant Women and Rape.

We also meet at 150 Richmond Road, Montpelier between the open meetings to discuss and organise what's going on and to keep in touch with each other. You're welcome to come along and the next one will be on Monday February 12th at 8pm. Do write or ring in for further information.

The Petition

We will be handing the petition in to the Government later this year, so please collect signatures wherever you can and send them back to the address below. Rape in marriage was being discussed in the press all over Christmas and the New Year following a case in which a woman brought her husband to Court in Oregon U.S.A. The man was acquitted but the public discussion continues and it's clear that W.A.R.'s campaign on rape in marriage has had a big impact on the press here.

Report to the Criminal Law Revision Committee.

Women Against Rape nationally will be presenting a report to the above committee in the summer and so me of the work on the report is to be done in Bristol. Anyone who is interested in being involved in this work please contact us, especially (but not only) women who have some experience of the law.

Putting pressure on local police and local authorities.

We are currently campaigning locally around two specific rape cases. One is that of a disabled older woman who we are helping to get rehoused following years of violent marriage. Although she has now got a divorce, the local authority seem to think she should continue to live with her husband. We are pressuring them to provide council accommodation for here and all the facilities one needs as a disabled woman.

The other is with a young woman who was raped by three men where the police are unwilling to bring the case to court. We are helping the woman and her family who want to make the police press rape charges, and we are ourselves putting pressure on the police.

There is a lot to be done around all these activities, so anyone who is interested and has some time do write or ring in.

Fund raising

The benefit dance went very well but we have continuing expenses and are again short of funds. If you have any ideas for fund raising or know of any organisation who might be willing to make a donation to W.A.R., please approach them yourself or let us know so we can approach them. Mailings cost money so please send contributions of stamps or postal orders so we can keep in touch with you. Hoping to see you or hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Barker. Women Against Rape Bristol.
150 Richmond Road, Bristol 6. Tel 422810.

Winning against rape

On Friday October 13th, on the eve of a Womens Liberation conference on rape, the popular local rock group 'Stranded' are organising a benefit dance in support of Women Against Rape in Bristol.

The group are playing at the benefit free and have organised and distributed publicity in consultation with Women Against Rape.

Stuart Chalmers the drummer for the group says:

"The way rape is handled by the authorities is a social injustice. The police do not make enough effort to catch rapists. In the courts the punishment for rape is not made to fit the crime and the victim is left just as badly off. But it is not only rape victims who find the courts work against them. The courts work against all working people."

This is not the first time men have organised in support of women. Mike French of Pay Day England, a group of men who have supported Women Against Rape at other times in the past, says:

"As men we both fear for and care for the women close to us - mo mothers, sisters, wives and friends, and support womens self organisation against the threat of rape and violence."

It is clear that it is in the interests of men as well as women that the crime of rape be taken seriously by the authorities and stopped.

Caroline Barker Women Against Rape, Bristol. Tel: 422810

Everyone welcome to the benefit dance at The Trinity Hall Club near Old Market, 8.30pm til 2.0 am Friday October 13th.

Plea for women in fear of rape

Alarm systems, telephones and night transport should all be provided free for women living in fear of the Bristol rapist, the city's Women Against Rape group demanded today.

They want alarm systems installed in women's homes on request and, if wished, linked to police stations.

Free transport should be given on request to women travelling around the city at night, they say.

And telephones should be installed free of charge for women who want them for their safety.

In addition, they want improved street lighting everywhere in the city, not only in Clifton at the expense of other areas.

"The council have got to start paying for women's safety," said group member Caroline Barker. "They should be able to recoup the money from the Government."

COSTS

The group said: "We women are not responsible for rape and should not have to bear the cost of rape either financially or by having to restrict our lives by being forced to live in fear of rape.

"The cost of these measures could be recovered from the Home Office which is responsible for the safety of women as for every other citizen, yet allows courts of justice to encourage rape.

"Bristol women can't afford to let those in authority take risks with our lives."

HUNT

Police in the city have stepped up their hunt for the man involved in the latest sex attack following fears that he might strike again.

Police cars as well as foot patrols were out in force last night in the Clifton area — particularly at The Mall.

A 45-year-old woman was attacked and sexually assaulted by an intruder in her home near The Mall.

A blue plastic handbag and a cheque book which were stolen from her have still not been found. Police today renewed their appeal urging business people in the city to watch out for the cheques.

Five ways to beat off the rape threat

IN VIEW of the ninth reported rape in Clifton and Redland, Bristol, within the past year, Women Against Rape, Bristol, are demanding:

- Improved lighting everywhere in Bristol and not only as has been suggested in Clifton.

- Free transport on request to women travelling about the city at night. Such systems have been used in parts of the USA.

- Free alarm systems to be installed in women's homes on request and if the woman wishes linked directly to police stations.

- Telephones installed free of charge to those women who want them for their safety.

We women are not responsible for rape and should not have to bear the cost of rape either

Wednesday, April 26 1978

EVENING POST

WESTERN DAILY PRESS, Friday

Safety plea for vice girls

By Jonathan Shorney

PROSTITUTES must be able to walk Avon's streets without fear of being raped, a women's pressure group said yesterday.

Women Against Rape blamed Tory Avon county council for poor street lighting.

Well-lit streets would discourage rape, they said.

And they would enable women who work at night, including prostitutes, bar and night club staff, to walk alone more safely.

A deputation of six women from the organisation yesterday met the council's Planning committee chairman, Tory Councillor William Mather Bell and other councillors to press their case.

They urged Avon to ask the Government for more cash towards better lighting.

Lorry ban

WAR spokeswoman Mrs Caroline Barker said: "Prostitution is a job. They are as vulnerable to rape as any women walking to and from their places of work. It's a job, like any other."

Committee deputy chairman, Tory Councillor Don Rippon asked a question: "Do we make it easier for people to break the law?"

A RND to ban heavy lor-

Dear Mr Editor

financially or by having to restrict our lives by being forced to live in fear of rape.

The costs of these measures could be recovered from the Home Office, which is responsible for the safety of women as for every other citizen, yet allows courts of justice to encourage rape.

Only a few weeks ago Judge Alan King-Hamilton let a rapist off with three years probation because he didn't feel the rape was severe enough to warrant any action.

He said: "I may be taking a risk but I'm prepared to take it."

Bristol women can't afford to let those in authority take risks with our lives.

Women Against Rape groups in other cities support our demands.

Caroline Baker, Women Against Rape (Address supplied)

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SAMPLE OF OUR LETTER HEADING

10th Year of Publication

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16/11/78

WOMEN AGAINST RAPE

Women Against Rape are organising a campaign to stop rape. Petitions, later to be presented to the Home Secretary, are being distributed and signed by men, as well as thousands of women, who agree that victims should receive compensation, when applicable, without a further trial, that rape in marriage should be made a crime by law, that prejudiced judges be barred from rape cases and that all women should have the financial independence needed to enable them to leave a situation where they or their children are in danger of rape.

Poor street lighting, contributory to rape, hopefully will be improved in Avon area since Women Against Rape's dialogue with Avon County Councillors in July.

Evidence is also to be given to the Law Reform Committee on sexual offences on the question of rape to ensure that, where necessary, legal aid is forthcoming so that victims can be legally represented and do not find themselves on trial, and will also include evidence on the question of rape in marriage.

Although, in law, rape is one of the four worst crimes, it is by no means taken as seriously as the other three, albeit death can be caused or the medical and psychological consequences can affect a victim for the rest of her life.

Rapists take no account of age, race, creed, or status, and will degrade any female including children, the disabled, pregnant women and the very elderly.

Next public meeting to be held on 28th November, 8 p.m. at The Folk House, 40 Park Street, at which all women are welcome.

Benefit dance

A benefit dance in support of the organisation "Women Against Rape" is being held in Bristol on Friday.

Popular local rock group "Stranded" will be playing at the dance at The Trinity Hall Club, Old Market, starting at 8.30 p.m. E.P. 11/19/78

Evening Post Bristol
28. Oct. 1979.

'Wives can't flee from violence'

Women in Bristol are staying with their violent husbands—because they don't have enough money to leave.

This was the claim made today by Women Against Rape spokeswoman Caroline Barker.

And WAR have launched a petition demanding financial independence for all women.

Their stand follows new proposals from the Government to reshuffle supplementary benefits.

"It is becoming more and more difficult for a woman to get out of a violent situation," said Miss Barker. "They are staying with their husbands simply because they will not survive financially if they move out.

"If the proposals to fix the rent allowance in the first weeks of a supplementary benefits claims are carried out, then this will get worse and more women will suffer."

WAR are holding a discussion meeting at the Folk House, 40, Park Street, Bristol, next Monday, at 8 pm, entitled "Violence in Marriage."

Women demand better lighting

The Bristol women's group, who are campaigning for the prevention of rapes and assaults on women, are to confront Avon councillors with their demands for better street lighting in Bristol.

"Women Against Rape" believe that well-lit streets would help to discourage rape and other acts of violence.

"It seems that Avon Council doesn't consider the safety of women as important," said their spokeswoman, Caroline Baker, today. "We cannot afford to wait for two years for improvements in street lighting as is Avon's present programme."

Members of Avon Planning and Highways Committee are to discuss the problem with Women Against Rape at Avon House, on July 20. *E.P. Bristol 12/7/78*

Street lights fight pressed

The Women Against Rape pressure group today stepped up their campaign to get Bristol's street lighting improved.

They have called on Avon County Council to again ask the Government for a grant to carry out the work.

Evening Post, Bristol
12/2/79

Scrap laws on prostitution, say group

By IAN WILLIAMS

Bristol pressure groups this afternoon pledged support of a national move to abolish all laws on prostitution.

Women Against Rape spokesman, Mrs Caroline Barker, said the streets would be safer for all women when the present laws were scrapped.

"At the moment it is a bigger crime to be a prostitute than it is to be a rapist," she said.

"Being a prostitute makes it almost impossible for them to report a rape to the police.

"The reason they go on the game in the first place is because women's wages and social security is far too low."

Sponsor Mrs Maureen Colquhoun, Labour MP for Northampton North, will be leading a debate on prostitution in the Commons next month.

PIMPS

"Prostitutes are a terribly oppressed and aggrieved minority and need fresh legal protection," she said.

"At the moment they are at the mercy of pimps and pones. The law refused to protect them against landlords who charged excessive rents, hotel staff who demanded big tips and club owners who employed them as low paid hostesses."

Mrs Colquhoun believes there are more than two million prostitutes in Britain.

Her Bill is also being backed by Ms Suzie Fleming, a spokeswoman for Wages for Housework Campaign, and a Bristol representative for the English Collective of Prostitutes — a group made up of both prostitutes and non-prostitutes.

E.P. 20.7.78