

Washington Area Womens Center
1736 R Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

May, 1973

232-5145..... 232-7533

PROJECT GROUP OF THE MONTH: CHILD CARE COLLECTIVE (Laurie Wright)

Every Friday night both mothers and women without children meet to discuss the problems of child-bearing and child-rearing in a society which on the one hand exalts motherhood and on the other hand thrusts mothers into a position of social and economic deprivation and self-denial unknown to any other oppressed group.

The topics of 'Men's Attitudes Towards Children', 'Women's Attitudes Towards Children', 'Children's Liberation', and 'Mothers in Society' have provided the framework in which to painfully find ourselves. Our lives exist at the base of women's oppression, i.e., the perpetuation of male culture through our children for whom we are primarily and ultimately responsible. And our very physical survival depends on the fulfillment of our function as transmitters and carriers of male values. The links in our chains are guilt, isolation and social ostracism.

As our group works its way through these issues, we are frustrated and frightened to find that our perceptions of rejection even by our own sisters in the women's movement are real. Our sisters often express indifference and hostility when children are around. "Why can't you discipline your kids?" "Why, after all, they are your children. And it is a rarity that anyone in a meeting shows concern for child-care arrangements so that mothers can participate in the center, much less anywhere else in society.

We are realizing that women with and without children must work together to become conscious that the issue of the caring for and socialization of children is paramount to the struggle for the liberation of women. We must discover the purpose of child care. The Child-Care Collective believes that they are synonymous with those of Feminism. That is: (1) The placement of power into women's hands. (2) The placement of economic and social value on child-rearing, which women solely do now as free labor, and extension of that labor to men on an equal basis. (3) The creation of a transformed society of healthy human beings free of racism, sex and class roles.

The Child-Care Collective is doing some concrete things about our lives. A presently operating nite-time child-care coop, so that mothers can attend meetings, or just rest! We are working now on the formation of a parent-controlled day-time child-care center. We need thirty mothers and their children. Also, we would like to start a mothers newsletter. We need your ideas and energies. Join us!

Nite-time Coop-- Cathy Arias - 332-7062

Day-time Child-Care Center-- Kim -387-5971, Susan-- 462-1432
Gwen--387-4648

Mothers Newsletter--Laurie - 232-2156, Marie--332-7062

Mothers Consciousness Raising- all of above.

NATIONAL WORKING MOTHERS DAY

On Tuesday, April 10, National Working Mothers Day, busloads of mothers and children arrived at HEW to protest Nixon administration cut-backs in day-care. Bella Abzug spent the morning with children in her office, and then marched with demonstrators, calling the child-care cuts "the most inhuman of the inhuman Nixon cuts." Congresswoman Schroeder D-Colo., brought her two and a half year old daughter to her office on the hill. Women brought their children to work all across the countryside in 26 states including Ala., New Jersey, Penn., and DC (last colony).

The two major organizing groups, Child Dev'p Council of America, Inc. and National Parents Federation for Day Care and Child Dev'p., reps from National Welfare Rights Organization and National Organization for Women, and mothers, met with HEW director Casper Weinberger's rep. Gertrude Hoffman. The mothers and child-care advocates charged the Nixon administration with forcing mothers on welfare and children into low-grade custodial day-care.

The new regulations would make government supported day care available only to parents with income 133 1/3 percent over the public assistance level. Presently, in D.C. child-care is available to working parents with incomes below \$7,000 most of whom are mothers heading families. According to the Washington Committee on Day Care, a woman with one child receives \$160.00 per month. The proposed regs would make a working mother ineligible if she earned \$2,557.00 per year. Minimal federal day care standards would no longer be federally reimbursable to the states, which means that day care standards would be eliminated. The regs also eliminate the right to match Title IV-A funds (day care funds) with private funds, thus wiping out a major money source for day care. Under the new proposed regulations, once a mother has completed her training and worked for three months, she is no longer eligible for day care. Therefore, she either goes back on welfare or crawls along at a subsistence level job in order to keep her child in a low-grade day care center.

According to the SISA DC Metropolitan Area Census, 53 percent of mothers with and without husbands work. Twelve percent of all families are headed by mothers, nearly 2/3 of whom are in the labor force. One half of these families are living in poverty, even according to ridiculously low gov't poverty standards.

Clearly, as long as women are solely responsible for child-care arrangement, they will remain economically insecure and often impoverished. The new Federal Regulations on child-care will be issued by HEW on May 1 in their final form. There is still time to fight for thousands of women and children that will lose this service which is essential to their survival. And we need to continue the fight for child care for the millions who don't have it. Contact Laurie-232-2156.

"The Feminist Counseling Collective isn't political enough; they're into personal solutions."

"Most women are in no position to give everything to a movement now; they have too many personal needs which have to be met first."

"Meeting women's needs is fine, but that's just social work. We need to work to gain political power."

"Political power? You mean Democrats vs. Republicans?"

"I am political because I am a lesbian."

"Some women at the Women's Center are into a macho power trip. They just run everything and intimidate anyone who questions them."

"The women's movement has to learn to trust leaders and those women with organizing skill."

"Others don't have a chance to use their skills because other women oppress them by refusing to help with child care."

How often have you heard statements like these--in a discussion among a few women, as a not-so-subtle innuendo at a coordinating council meeting, or occasionally talked about in a community meeting when one or more women decide to present their views to whoever turns out.

All of these statements deal with the political implications of what goes on at the Women's Center, and yet most of the 900 women interested in the Women's Center don't hear about, much less understand them. Often, out of frustration, women bandy such thoughts about as political gossip or use them as guilt trips instead of developing them openly and allowing response and discussion which encourages dialectic progression and growth.

Political ideas relating to the Center are seldom discussed in this way largely because there has been no medium to do so. When the Center first started, public forums were proposed to serve this function. However, the few forums that have been called have been poorly attended--apparently another meeting is not by itself the best medium of political discussion for women already surfeited with project meetings, coordinating council meetings, staff collective meetings, ad nauseum. The project groups themselves are busy answering day-to-day needs of women--getting abortions and divorces, giving support during crises, writing handbooks, running training sessions--while the coordinating council deals with scheduling, fund raising and allocation of funds, or staffing problems. Theory is silenced by the demands of practice.

The newsletter staff has decided to develop the newsletter into a forum to fill that gap: to provide space for women to express their views on the politics of anything that goes on at the Women's Center, and to deal with and perhaps resolve conflicts on a political rather than personal level. Women in project groups have valuable contact with many women in and out of the women's movement. They will be encouraged to extract and share political insights from that resource. Women new to the Center will hear about what's going on at a level other than: "This project group is doing such-and-such." And in the process we will be recording our herstory.

Now that you've heard the benefits of this plan, you ask, what do we want

of you? We want your ideas, your bitches, your analysis of what's wrong and what's right at the Center, your wildest fantasies to revolutionize the Center, what you've learned here, or anything you deem appropriate. Write a letter, an article or any form of communication you want, and bring it to the Women's Center office where the newsletter's notebook will be kept. If you have some ideas and would like help getting them in writing, a member of the newsletter staff will be glad to help you. Deadlines generally fall in the middle of the month.

Of course, the newsletter will continue to post announcements, schedules and other news of interest to the women's community. The deadline for the next newsletter is May 19. A meeting will be held on Sunday, May 20, to organize.

The collating party will be held Sunday May 27 at 3:30. Bring a picnic lunch and there will be free beer.

Quote of the Month

It is the easiest thing in the world to say every broad for herself--saying it and acting that way is one thing that's kept some of us behind the eight-ball where we've been living for a hundred years.... Billie Holliday



RADIO FREE WOMEN can be heard on WGTB radio, 90.1 f.m., on Mondays at 2:30 P.M. and Tuesdays at 6:30 P.M. A SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS ON CLASS & CLASSIS! within the womens movement.

C

Participating in the discussions are Doloris Bragowski, former member of the New York Feminists and a radical lesbian collective in D.C.; Pita 'lae'Brown, poet and former member of the Furies. Karen Kollias and Bev Fisher who were organizers of the Women's Center. Bev has worked with ELDF and Karen works with the Rape Crisis Center.

The shows will be as follows:



- 1) Class within the Women's Movement, April 16 and 17
- 2) Class and Culture, April 16 and 17
- 3) Class: Communication and Expression, April 23 and 24
- 4) Class and Family Background, April 30/May 1
- 5) Leadership and Class, May 7 and 8
- 6) Leadership and Class, May 14 and 15
- 7) Visions for the Future, May 28 and 29

Response is welcomed. Also listen to Sophies Parlor, music by and for women, every Monday, noon til 2:30 P.M.

A PIANO has been very generously donated to the Womens Center by LLZ CRANE and PAT WEBBINK. It's already being enjoyed by many visitors to Sophies Parlor and will be very handy for concerts and partys in the center. It is very much appreciated.





THE PHONES IN THE MAIN OFFICE are the first contact many women have with the center, or perhaps with the Women's Movement. Phones are staffed voluntarily 12 hours a day. Lately, the phones have not been covered adequately. This is an important responsibility. If you can staff the phones a few hours a week, please do.

PHONE DIRECTORY



Womens Center - 232-5145 or 232-7533
 Womens Legal Defense Fund - 232-5293
 National Organization for Women (NOW) 387-6895
 Womens Free Clinic - 965-5476
 Radio Free Women - 338-4727 or 387-6063
 Abortion Counsellors - 483-4632
 Rape Crisis Center - 333-RAPE



THE FEMINIST ART WORKSHOP needs a sunlamp, bulb and socket and an extension cord. They are needed for chemical process silkscreening. If anyone can donate any of these items they would be very much appreciated. Call Sue at 234-8047 or Jackie 387-6063.

When we're set up for screenprinting we intend to make posters to promote local feminist groups and activities. We are learning lettering and layout as well as trying to develop a feminist aesthetic.

Some of us are learning about other printing processes. We are anxious to share any information and skills we have. If you're interested in visual arts, and/or graphics, join us on Saturdays at 2:30 P.M.

LATE BULLETINS:



HELP WANTED. ANY WOMAN INTERESTED IN A PART-TIME STAFF POSITION AT THE WOMENS CENTER, at \$2.50 per hour, should call the Womens Center at 232-5145, or Barbara Rellick at 234-0217. We have 2 positions open, to start the middle of May. We're looking for women who are involved in the center, who can deal with people, and help run the Center.



There will be a General Assembly meeting on MAY 10, Thursday at 7:30 P.M. Attendance at these meetings has been very poor. Since this meeting will be held in the evening instead of the afternoon we feel that attendance should be better. It's your Womens Center too.

A Coordinating Council meeting will follow the General Assembly.



There is a TASK BOOK in the main office of the Womens Center in which specific tasks and ongoing responsibilities are recorded. There are many small chores that need to be done. This is an efficient way to complete these tasks. If you can give us a hand it would help.



KATHY ARIAS HAS WON THE CAR. The drawing for the car raffle was held on April 1.

RAPE PREVENTION TACTICS



Rape prevention tactics are available from the Rape Crisis Center. We would like to reproduce them for you intact. But because of our limited space, we will print one section in this newsletter every month.

As rape becomes more of a problem, more women are feeling the real need to protect themselves. We would like every woman to be trained in self-defense, but this isn't easy to do, and even so, this in itself won't stop rape. We must, as women, feel stronger about ourselves and this can't really happen unless we are aware of our situations and how we might control some of them. These rape prevention tactics are only a step in getting control of our lives, but it is an important one.

Where You Live:

Many rapes and attacks happen in the houses and apartments where women live. The landlords of these places don't keep up with security, and they should be pressured to do so.

1. There should be lights in all entrances where you live.
2. All windows should be in place and have locks; if you live in a basement or first floor, bars should be put in by the landlord. Curtains and/or blinds should be on every window.
3. There should be strong locks (maybe double ones) for every door in your place.
4. Be aware of places where men might hide; under stairs, between buildings.
5. If you live by yourself or with other women, don't put your full name on the mailbox, use your first initial. (S. Smith, not Sue Smith- use for phonebooks)
6. Know some of your neighbors and which ones you could trust in an emergency.
7. Always know who it is knocking at your door before opening. If it is a service man, ask for identification. If you're alone at night and not expecting anyone, respond to a ring or knock with, "I'll get it Bill!"
8. When returning home at night, have your keys ready before you get to the door. If someone is watching you, don't show them where you live.
9. If there is a suspicious person on the same elevator, push the emergency button and all the floor buttons. Get off the first floor it stops at.

Next month: Protecting yourself on the street.

SOME ON-GOING TASKS:

Cleaning up the area behind the building
Taking out the trash
Cleaning up within the building
Logging in the mail

SOME SPECIFIC TASKS:

Obtaining fire extinguishers for the Center
Building some kind of a frame for the trash cans



ANN TOMPKINS will speak at the Womens Center on Tuesday, MAY 8, at 8:00 P.M. She spent 6 years in the REPUBLIC OF CHINA, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, and is just returning from a 3 month trip to China.

The 'Workolace Organizing' course will not be held that night but will resume 2 weeks later.

HELP!

HELP!

HELP!

We desperately need pots and pans! If you have any old ones or any that you just plain don't like, why not (?!?!?) donate them to The Center? We'll take anything and everything as long as they don't leak. Thanks muchly.

night but will resume 3 weeks later. The course will not be held that

the course organizing. Courses will not be held that
and a few returning from a 3 month
at the beginning of the official
the course will be held in the
Joseph

Building some kind of a course in the first and
Operating fire engine and pump in the center

logging in the mill
Cleaning up within the building
Taking out the trash
Cleaning up the area behind the building

30th ON-GOING WEEKS