

## FROM WAVAW TORONTO TO ALL WOMEN AND ALL WOMEN'S GROUPS

This is to introduce the Toronto WAVAW group to women throughout Canada. On the enclosed pages we have attempted to present ourselves to you; what we believe, what we have done, what we are doing. One of our primary aims is to establish ACTIVE CONNECTIONS with as many women and women's groups as possible.

—We would like to hear from you:

Who you are

What you believe

What you are doing

What you want to do

What are your needs, expectations, hopes

What you think of WAVAW, our perspective, our actions

Whether you see any possibility of cooperation, ongoing contacts between WAVAW and your group or individual women from your group.

PLEASE WRITE US, SEND US ANYTHING WHICH WOULD HELP US TO KNOW YOU, ANYTHING WHICH WILL HELP TO ESTABLISH ACTIVE CONTACT BETWEEN US.

—We have an active telephone tree in the Toronto calling area. We welcome branches to this tree. If you are interested in plugging in, send us ONE name and number which will connect to your group.

—We have access to some skills, resources, information, equipment ect. as has every group or individual, including you. Let's start strengthening and complementing each other.

—We have produced a **Women Against Violence Against Women** poster. Its lay-out and content is as shown and the actual size is 18 by 24 inches. They can be posted singly as notice of WAVAW's existence or in numbers to highlight violence against women as a reality in your community. We are selling them for 1.00 each, prepaid. We hope you will place an order.

WAVAW,  
P.O. BOX 928,  
STATION Q,  
TORONTO, ONT.



## **WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

### **STATEMENT OF PERSPECTIVE AND INTENT (PROVISIONAL)**

**WAVAW is women fighting for women. WAVAW's orientation is specifically feminist in content, structure and execution. It is conceived of as but one segment of a broad struggle which women are waging throughout the world. It in no way replaces or supercedes any other feminist struggle or group.**

—WAVAW believes that violence against women differs fundamentally from violence between men. Much of the violence between men (such as war, fights for the possession of women or other 'property') has a traditionally heroic aspect to it which confirms men's position and strength. Other kinds of violence between men, such as racial attacks, get much of their energy from ignorance and fear of the distant and strange. Women's experience of violence is totally different from men's. Violence 'happens' to us as supposedly a natural and 'normal' consequence of being female. Even if we escape physical violence to our bodies, and that is rare, we can never escape the constant assaults on our psyche which totally dominate the world we live in. This world is deeply misogynistic. Its violence against our deepest selves scars and destroys us. WAVAW intends to fight this violence against women on all fronts.

—WAVAW specifically rejects the passive role of victim in which women have been cast and which is continually forced upon us. It is WAVAW's declared policy and practice to initiate, encourage, and support strong and positive actions by women against all violence against us. WAVAW totally rejects any so-called 'solutions' to the problem of violence against women which perpetuate fear among women and increase reliance on the existing power structures or on male protection generally.

—WAVAW's list of demands summarizes our position on major areas of violence against women. WAVAW is open to any women who agree with those demands and with the general perspective expressed in this document.

—Any group of women which endorses this statement (including demands) and acts in a manner consistent with it can be considered part of WAVAW and may receive any support or help within the power and resources of the present WAVAW group.

—WAVAW may support any women on any one or more issues listed under DEMANDS, whether or not these women support ALL the WAVAW demands, as long as their perspective on the specific issue(s) is feminist and consistent with that of WAVAW.

—WAVAW will not actively seek cooperation with non-feminist, non-women-only groups. WAVAW may align itself on any specific issue with any group, organization or individual whose objectives coincide with WAVAW on that issue, or whose position or resources may be helpful in carrying on the struggle or solving a specific problem (e.g. arrest).

—WAVAW's intention is to contact as many women and groups as possible for the purpose of building a women's network of communication, co-operation and mutual support. WAVAW is presently compiling a list of women's organizations and groups in the Metro Toronto area. Input is needed from the women's community at large especially from small, informal units such as consciousness-raising and feminist study groups, women's fitness, self-defence and self-improvement classes, women's art and craft groups and similar.

**ANYONE WISHING TO CONTACT WAVAW OR TO SUPPLY INFORMATION IS URGED TO WRITE:**

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## WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### WAVAW DEMANDS

1. *We insist on freedom of movement for all women, in any part of the city or country, at any time. We insist on our right to remain unmolested physically and verbally wherever we are and whoever we are. We insist on our right to defend ourselves and each other by any means available.*
2. *We insist on action which focuses on taking the profit out of violence and hate propaganda wherever it occurs and NOT harassment of working women who have few enough choices as it is. We insist that the current hypocritical 'cleanup Yonge Street' campaign be stopped. We insist that police, who now 'serve and protect' business interests which profit from violence and hate, stop harassing lesbians and prostitutes. We insist on full civil rights for all women, especially lesbians and visible minorities.*
3. *We insist on the decriminalization of prostitution.*
4. *We insist that rape is a crime based on hate and not on sex. It is an act of violence against the whole person of the woman intended to intimidate and to confirm men's power over all women. We insist that the law and the courts treat it as an assault and not a 'sexual' crime.*
5. *We insist that police and courts respond to wife and child beating as they would (or should) to any assault. We insist that women cease to be coerced to remain or return to intolerable home situations. We insist that all women but especially poor, native and immigrant women, have the means to escape and a place to escape to. We insist on adequate support for Nellie's Hostel for Women, Rape Crisis Centre and other places necessary for our safety and survival. We insist that these remain under the control and direction of women who staff them and women they serve.*
6. *We insist on the elimination of female job ghettos and the growing wage gap between men and women. We insist on full economic self-sufficiency of women.*
7. *We insist on the right of any woman to bear and raise children in dignity and freedom from economic want. We insist on adequate support for single mothers and welfare women and on day care for all children who need it and want it. We insist that children not be separated from their mothers because of their mothers' lesbianism.*
8. *We insist that abortion be taken out of the Criminal Code. We insist on the provision of women-run clinics where good healthcare, birth control information, and safe abortions will be available free to all women. We insist that the need for back-street abortions be removed.*
9. *We insist on dignified treatment of women in prisons and all so-called correctional institutions. We insist on feminist training and good pay for female staff and on non-sexist counselling for all women.*
10. *We insist on the right of women to express themselves sexually and not be harassed or discriminated against for lesbian sexual orientation. We insist that lesbians be covered by the Human Rights Code.*
11. *We insist that forced sterilization of immigrant and native women be stopped.*
12. *We insist on an end to violence against women in mental health institutions and the offices of private psychotherapists. Such violence takes the form of sexist counselling, the abuse of shock treatment, extensive drug therapy and psychosurgery. We insist on provision of adequate feminist therapy and referral services.*

**THESE DEMANDS ARE MADE AND OUR CAMPAIGN CONDUCTED ON BEHALF OF ALL WOMEN**

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## WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN TORONTO

SINCE NOVEMBER 5, 1977

The present Toronto group, Women Against Violence Against Women, grew out of the original Day of Protest against Violence Against Women held on November 5, 1977. The specific action which galvanized hundreds of women on that day was a street demonstration which culminated in a protest against the movie SNUFF. The extent and intensity of that protest demonstrated in concrete form the anger women feel at our victimisation, in image and in fact.

During the following week, direct street action was combined with attempts to draw attention to the issue through established channels such as presentations to Toronto, Metro and City Councils, letters to newspapers, etc. These established channels proved as unresponsive to this as to other demands and protests made by women now and in the past. Our concerns were trivialized by the media and others. Some politicians attempted to co-opt our energies towards the hypocritical 'clean up Yonge Street' which penalizes working women and leaves the profiteers unscathed.

The SNUFF OUT SNUFF action is an object lesson, in case we need any, in the realities of power in our society. The women of WAVAW are determined to challenge this misogynistic power and the violence perpetrated against women. Since November, WAVAW has become involved in:

- work towards the decriminalization of prostitution
- inauguration of a Remembrance Day ceremony — "For every woman raped in every war".
- protests against the deportation of immigrant women on clearly sexist and racist grounds
- action against Renaissance International's "Christian Liberation Crusade" which imported Anita Bryant to Canada and which promotes anti-feminism and homophobia
- organizing with local women against domestic and street violence in the suburbs

Concurrently, WAVAW is organizing, gathering women and resources, working out its position on various aspects of violence against women in both theory and practice. WAVAW is committed to *action* against violence against women from a *feminist* perspective.

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