

To Pg 15

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YOUTH LIBERATION

NEWS, POLITICS, AND SURVIVAL INFORMATION PUT TOGETHER
BY YOUTH LIBERATION OF ANN ARBOR



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A Note To Our Readers

We at Times Change Press are people going through changes and trying to participate in bringing about fundamental changes in an oppressive world. Since we started a couple of years ago, we've come to realize that this change needs to be bigger and more comprehensive than we conceived it originally. And we've realized that social change has to be based on changes in people's daily lives.

We think consciousness is essential to self-controlled change—so we're recycling the information and experience on which consciousness is based in the form of pamphlets and posters. We hope to also contribute toward the creation of a liberatory culture—a culture that will give us the reflection of ourselves that we otherwise never see. Also we want our material to avoid functioning as commodities and so we urge that the stuff be used and passed around.

Financially, the press is oriented toward survival, not profit. Except for nominal salaries and repayment of debts, all our money goes toward production of more material. Our prices are high, we know, but the realities of being little people in capitalist publishing (small printing runs, competition with slick bookstore formats) don't leave us much room for choice. We've decided to change our binding to "square back"—in an effort toward better circulation, especially in bookstores and libraries.

We are interested in circulating the thoughts and experiences of people involved in struggles toward liberation. And in these struggles we see no experts or professionals. We depend on you who use our material to, in turn, supply us with written and graphic material for the use of others. We also depend—in order to function as a valid, responsive resource—on your critical and supportive *feedback*. Please, let us know what you think of individual pamphlets and posters and about TCP in general. Also, we want to hear any ideas or suggestions you may have for future publications.

We think an awareness and validation of personal oppression needs to be synthesized with a comprehensive approach to world change. Through this personal/political synthesis we can make the necessary changes in all aspects of our lives as social beings. We think all forms of oppression are valid and interrelated. And so our approach to liberation needs to be big enough to accommodate everyone's needs.

Our name derives from the following (modified) phrase in the I Ching (chapter on Revolution): Times change and with them their possibilities; TIMES CHANGE AND WITH THEM THEIR DEMANDS. It reflects our feeling that the common "enemy" of all liberation struggles is the unwillingness to change.

YOUTH LIBERATION

INTRODUCTION

When I was six years old I ran away.

But I didn't go very far. My father followed me down the street with a movie camera, laughing at me. When I was thirteen I ran away again. The reason wasn't clear, but whatever it was I must have been feeling it pretty strongly. I stayed out in below-freezing weather and slept in an old bus. I was not free. I couldn't leave because they have horrible mind-shrinking places to put you in. I was lucky. My parents never called the police. But how many young people are not so lucky? Everyone needs Youth Liberation, not just young people, but also old people, new people, any people. At night I have this habit of running in the woods. Past curfew, past the houses, watching the dark.

Laura, 16

Ever since I was very small I had trouble with school. I was impatient and I had teachers that wouldn't tolerate this. I remember one year I went less than half the school year because I became so hurt and upset. Going to high school, I came across many people telling me what "life's all about." Hell, it's been school that's been stifling my own self and keeping me from finding out what life's all about. School is a very clear symbol of how young people are treated. Living as a "minor," "juvenile," or any other label placed on young people, I rapidly became aware of our carefully drawn "limits."

Cathi, 16

I was raised in the movement. I was always taught that all people were equal and I would be too—when I grew up. I guess I sort of accepted it and did what I was expected to do. At least until fifth grade. Growing up in New York, and going to school in a black neighborhood of Brooklyn, the revolutionary and black separatist movements had great effect on all the people in my school. In fifth grade there was this racist, mean teacher who refused to let us use the class for black education classes. So we rebelled. We wore stickers to assemblies saying "Fuck Fisher," who was our assistant principal. We sat down in assemblies. We threw chairs out of windows and got suspended for refusing to come into the school until they started black history classes. All this went very well until the next year, when I was tracked away from all my black friends and they became black separatists. Things got on edge and it ended up where I kicked my ex-best friend's ass, had a bunch of people ready to kick mine, and was generally tired of the whole thing. So I split home. Moved in with some friends on the Lower East Side and stayed there for two days. I was caught and

then I split again. The last time I split I went and stayed with two friends from Yippie! They gave me a bus ticket to Ann Arbor, \$50, and a place to stay when I got there. So I went to Ann Arbor and stayed for 3 weeks. Went home and talked some things out with my parents. After that they sent me down to Florida to stay with some friends of mine. While I was there I got into a lot of death-culture drugs and ended up in the hospital from an overdose of ups and downs. The rest of the year was just as bad. I came back to Ann Arbor twice and went out to the west coast. Finally my father got a job in Detroit and we moved to Ann Arbor. I've been living in a collective (with my parents, too) and been working on Youth Liberation ever since.

Dave, 13

I ran away 3 times last spring and my mother was thinking of putting me in a mental hospital because that's what her minister recommended. I came home and compromises were worked out. After a short period of time my mother had broken most of the promises she had made. When I brought up the subject she usually wormed out of it. Sometimes I used to wish I'd gone into the mental hospital; Jon was there and he said it wasn't bad. Anything to get out. I know my mother is wrong, horribly wrong, but she fools people well enough so they don't realize the frustration and bullshit I have to deal with every day. I can't even explain how awful it is. Sometimes I think of the butcher knife in the kitchen drawer and what I could do with it. When I'm in the same room as my mother I ignore her as much as possible because I dislike her. I'm scared of being like her. I'm moving out for the last six weeks of the summer to a house with 3 other sisters, I never want to come back to my mother's lifestyle. It's fucked up and I'll fight it 'til I die.

Alice, 14

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Schools and families are the places where we begin to feel that we have to struggle for our freedom.

We want to learn what we need to make a good life on this earth, so we went to school. In school we found out that what was worth learning had been decided before we got there. It was laid out in neat chunks called grades, for twelve years in a row, and broken down into pieces, called subjects. But we wanted to know what the real world was like, and what does it mean to live a good life?

Questions like these got lousy answers. Just more subjects and tests and grades. We learned to stand in lines, to sit still and shut up, and to obey adults with authority. We learned to be bored and we hated school.

But we couldn't get out. Laws say that we have to take our bodies into those schools and police are hired to enforce them. Some of us tried to change things but we had no power. If we tried harder, like by calling a demonstration or by publishing an independent newspaper, we quickly learned that we did not have the right to free thinking, or freedom of speech, or freedom of the press, or freedom of assembly or anything else.

In our families we hoped for love and care and friendship and cooperation. Some of us had a happier time than others, but we all ended up in another system of absolute authority, with the young people at the bottom. We could only be as free as our parents allowed us to be. They punished us for refusing to obey. And, just like school, the police would come after us if we tried to get away. Our lives are considered the property of various adults. *We do not recognize their right to control us.* We call this control *Adult Chauvinism*, and we will fight it.

We quickly begin to learn that these schools and families are part of a whole system that is sick. Racism is bitterly damaging the lives of blacks and brown and red and yellow and white people. Sexism forces women into competition for men, into boring roles as the servants of men, and into objects for the sexual use of men. We know that free and open sexual relationships, homosexual as well as heterosexual, are beautiful, but we are taught that most are immoral. Society is divided into classes—the upper classes get the wealth and privileges while most of us spend our lives as exploited workers. American imperialism is attempting to milk the wealth of the whole world at gunpoint, and will destroy a country rather than “loose” it. We are fed an idiot culture through the TV tube, and our own new culture, from music and marijuana to free clinics and food cooperatives, is endlessly harassed. And now we learn that this whole system is being run so badly that the earth and its people are heading towards disaster. There are more possibilities of ecological disaster than we can keep track of. It is oppressive to think that you have a very small chance of dying a natural death, yet studies have shown that *most American young people believe they will die before their time.* And what kind of country is this where the second largest cause of death among young people is suicide? We formed Youth

Liberation because we refuse to despair or give up.

Through our platform we try to look at the whole range of problems that face us. If we don't have a clear picture of our overall situation and strategy, small defeats can take on too much significance. Our basic goal can be stated in a few words—*We want the power to control our destiny*—we want self-determination over our lives. This is not only our right; youth self-determination is necessary if human beings are going to survive on this planet.

The simple fact is that our generation is different from any other generation in history. We have lived our whole lives with the possibility of species suicide. We are the first products of a truly mass-based educational system. For the first time in history efficient contraception enables us to separate sex from having babies. We are the first generation to live in a time of instant global communications. We are the first generation to take basic material needs almost for granted, and thus be able to seek the real meaning and potential of our existence. We understand this world as the old people who created it and control it never can.

In this time when great change happens at such rapid speed it would seem reasonable that young people should be sincerely communicated with by older people. Cultural changes and adaptations made by young people should be respected. Since the outlook of young people has been completely shaped by the new world we live in, our perceptions and experience should be seriously considered as a guide and a path into the future.

Youths struggling for our liberation will succeed only through unity. But this will be difficult for many reasons. We don't have free access to communication or information since we spend all our time in institutions run and controlled by adults. Racism, tracking and other forms of manipulation are used to divide different races, sexes and classes of youth so that they hate each other instead of the people in power. And even though most young people are beginning to realize how wrong things are, many of us see no hope. Many young people go for short term rewards like a boring but steady job. And many of us just want to forget what's happening—so we dose-up on dope, Jesus, TV and booze, or we just give up and forget about trying to be free.

Youth Liberation believes that the hopeless can be organized to become fighters. We believe that when the youth mass begins to recognize that our political and physical survival is at stake, the differences between us will prove to be less important than our common goals. Large numbers of very young people can be recruited to the struggle if we treat children with dignity, respect and full equality. We place our hope in children.

The goal of our organization is to unfold a whole new dimension of human liberation. There are seventy-million human beings in the United States under the age of eighteen—that's one-third of its population. Fifty million of these people are imprisoned in public school. But very few young people have been actually organized. On the Left, Adult Chauvinism still permeates. Too few radicals relate to Adult Chauvinism as an important aspect of human oppression. At present we are our only hope. Through hard work, and joy, we plan to educate and mobilize our people. Our ultimate goal is to join forces with all the people in the world in order to transform the earth.

Ann Arbor Youth Liberation has existed now for about two years. The first time most of us were together was at the Constitutional Convention in Washington, November 1970. We started talking about high school organizing and family hassles. We recognized that no political platform or group existed anywhere that spoke to our own basic needs and desires. One Sunday afternoon, a month or so after returning home, two of us sat down for five hours and drew up the first draft of the Youth Liberation Platform. We made a lot of copies but ended up throwing them away because the program continually had to be changed after discussions with new people. Twelve of us went out to a farm one weekend and went over each point, sentence by sentence. As soon as we released the platform it started getting printed in underground papers all over the country.

Some of our activities center on trying to end laws that discriminate against young people. In the spring of 1971 we convinced the Ann Arbor city council to drop its curfew laws. We presently have a case in court challenging Adult Chauvinist election laws.

We went into the 1971-1972 school year with big ambitions. We wanted to start a student union in all schools, which were to be local

units of a city-wide Ann Arbor Student Union. Demonstrations were organized against the suspension policy. A committee was set up to investigate tracking. We had mixed results. In schools where we had strong organizers, we formed unions with large membership. We demanded and won the right to have meetings during school hours. Representatives from all the schools met and formulated city-wide demands for union recognition, teacher-student equality and an end to tracking. But these unions were not able to sustain themselves.

Ann Arbor Youth Liberation still believes that Student Unions must be built, but we know that we were too naive about it the first time around. During the 1972-73 school year most efforts will go into *Youth Rising*, our city-wide school underground paper. We will organize Unions again after we have used the paper to build up the communication channels and the general consciousness of oppression necessary to make unions work.

In the spring of '72 we added electoral politics to our strategies. The local Human Rights Party, supporters of the youth liberation movement, nominated 15 year old comrade Sonia Yaco to run on their slate for School Board. "I'm running to prove a political point," said Sonia. "The Board of Education controls the lives of students, and therefore students should have a voice on the board." Her name was kept off the ballot by adult chauvinist election laws. Still, in the write-in campaign she received over thirteen hundred votes (8% of the total), dramatizing the issue of adult chauvinism to the Ann Arbor community. (What if young people had been able to vote?!)

Youth Liberation has now incorporated CHIPS (Cooperative High School Independent Press Service—a newspaper exchange service) and FPS (the news service). Most of the articles contained in this pamphlet came from FPS. John Schaller, the founder of CHIPS/FPS, wrote a piece for this article explaining why he got started and how he joined up with Youth Liberation:

In the end of 1968 my family had just moved to an all-white suburb of Chicago, and I was amazed at the racism displayed by many of the students. Here were attitudes which I hadn't known existed in that part of the country. Worse yet, almost no one was doing anything about this or the other problems that were crying for discussion, least of all the school newspapers. So a group of

us decided to start putting out our own paper. It was fun at times, but we often felt isolated and alone. There we were, in a little suburb surrounded by cornfields, and we didn't know anyone else involved in anything like this.

It was to relieve that feeling of isolation that I started CHIPS, which then stood for Chicago area Highschool Independent Press Syndicate. It was a small group at first—even by late 1969 the members numbered barely a dozen—and its main function was to allow different papers to see what each other printed. At that point, letters from around the country were making it clear that high school papers everywhere were having the same isolation problems. So CHIPS became nationwide, and the name changed to Cooperative Highschool Independent Press Syndicate. It grew quickly from there, and soon had members in nearly twenty states—all of us exchanging our papers and trying to keep up with what was going on.

Many of the people suggested that CHIPS could be even more helpful by distributing short news stories to members in addition to helping them see each other's papers. From that grew the idea of a news service that would be directed at underground and independent high school newspapers, giving them news, feature stories and graphics to reprint.

During the summer of 1970, after talking to students from different areas, I became convinced that such a service was needed, and that it could be sent to people doing all types of work around high school and youth related issues, not just those publishing papers. That September the first issue of this news service, christened FPS, was published. It came out infrequently at first, but within a few months, was meeting the goal of coming out bi-weekly.

About that time, I first heard about Youth Liberation, which was getting started in Ann Arbor. It was clear that we had similar goals, and we corresponded considerably. When the Youth Liberation program was printed in FPS, many readers showed an interest in it and wrote about some of the ways they had experienced age discrimination. The following summer, in 1971, I moved to Ann Arbor where CHIPS and FPS became a part of Youth Liberation.

Young people are tricked and lied to from the first. Truth is confused, mystified, turned inside out, and then crammed down our throats. When we revolt as individuals we are isolated.

We of Youth Liberation believe that the time is soon coming when we will revolt together—then we can no longer be crushed. We will destroy all the myths that are fed to young people to keep us powerless. We will stamp out the false idea that the adults in power really do know what is going on and are somehow acting in our best interests.

We will tell the truth because we believe in our young sisters and brothers. The masses of young people will rise up when we begin to

understand the truth. We will break down the barriers between each other so that our strength can multiply. We will be living examples of a new kind of people living a life which has purpose.

The struggle for Youth Liberation is just beginning. We are like a new born baby—we have no power, but unlimited potential. Like a baby we will develop and become strong. The system of schools and families today holds total control over us and many of us will not dare to fight. But in reality this system has long passed its time of usefulness and we all know it.

This culture that exploits and degrades us is in fact hanging on desperately trying to stop the advance of history. It won't fall by itself—we will have to push it over. Once we taste victory we can never be stopped. Soon the Youth Liberation struggle will surge forward to join all other liberation movements of oppressed people in the fight for a whole new civilization. The darkness will then pass from the sky and the sun will break through. Our enemy is nearing extinction while we are approaching victory. We are young. We want to live. We are the future. ●



YOUTH LIBERATION PROGRAM

Every day it becomes clearer that we might be the last generation in the experiment with living. The problems facing humanity are so huge that some of us think working for change is futile. We of Youth Liberation, however, will not be led either to the treadmill or to the slaughterhouse like "good Germans." We know there is a basic decision to make, either we stay quiet and become part of a system of oppression, or we seize control of our lives, take risks, and struggle to build something new. We believe that problems have causes and that by studying these causes we can learn solutions. We know that young people have power if we take it and use it. We must liberate ourselves from the death trip of corporate America. We must take control of our lives because within us is the seed of a new reality—a seed that cannot grow until our lives are our own. It is a reality of ecstasy, made up of love, justice, freedom, peace and plenty.

The Youth Liberation program is an attempt to put together truth about what is wrong with our present situation and to lay out changes that must be made. This process never ends. To win we must know very clearly what we want and what we reject. We are learning to struggle together. If our program strays from the specific needs of youth, it is because we know that we are not free until all people are free and the earth is a healthy place to live.

1 *We want the power to control our own lives*
WE WANT THE POWER TO DETERMINE OUR OWN DESTINY. *This means an end to adult supremacy control.*

2 WE WANT THE IMMEDIATE END OF ADULT CHAUVINISM
We believe ideas should be judged on their merit and people on their wisdom or kindness. Age *in itself* deserves no recognition. Adults who want to support youth struggle or "improve communication" should show their concern by providing concrete resources. Words alone are not enough. Age might once have led to wisdom, but ~~the old~~ *adults* have proven themselves unable to deal with present reality. If the human species is to survive, the young must take the lead. *Smash Adult Supremacy*

3 WE WANT FULL CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS
We believe young people are necessary participants in democracy. We must have complete freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion, and the right to vote. We believe that all people are created

equal and are endowed with certain unalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

4 WE WANT THE RIGHT TO FORM OUR EDUCATION ACCORDING TO OUR NEEDS

We believe compulsory education is a form of imprisonment and must be abolished immediately. Grades and all forms of tracking must end because they stimulate competition, divide us, and make us work for other people's ends. All discipline procedures must be decided democratically within the school community. No school staff should be hired or fired without the democratic consent of students and teachers. Students and the community must have the right to use school facilities whenever they feel it is necessary.

5 WE WANT THE FREEDOM TO FORM INTO COMMUNAL FAMILIES

We believe that the nuclear family is not in the best interest of the people involved. Young people are now considered property—to be molded in the image of their parents. Since we demand self-determination for our lives, this is intolerable. In communal families children can grow in the company of many people, both peers and adults. They can learn the cooperation of community rather than the oppression of ownership. Until communal families are a reality, some healthy provision must be made for young people whose present conditions of life force them to become cultural refugees. *? allotment of money choice of alternative living situation*

6 WE WANT THE END OF MALE CHAUVINISM AND SEXISM
We believe women must be free and equal. We recognize that sexism is all-pervasive and often subtle and demeans the humanity of everyone. All forms of sex role stereotyping must end. Macho must go. Abortions must be free and legal. We consider the women's movement our natural ally since both young people and women are systematically oppressed by male supremacist society.

7 WE WANT THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE AN AUTHENTIC CULTURE WITH INSTITUTIONS OF OUR OWN MAKING

We believe western culture is ~~destructive~~ ^{destructive and} decadent ~~and~~ ^{strike} we refuse to continue it in our lives. People's appearance must not affect their civil rights. All drugs must be legalized, as we see that it is not laws which govern people's use of drugs, but societal conditions. We hope to create a society in which people will not need death drugs. Our music and cultural gatherings must be allowed to flourish in peace. We must be set free to begin living in the new age and begin to accept a responsibility for developing plans and examples of institutions that build joy, justice, and a respect for life.

8 WE WANT SEXUAL SELF-DETERMINATION ^{we believe that it is good for people to express themselves sexually and sexually}
We believe all people must have the unhindered right to be heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or transsexual. ^{and engage in any practices they want to as long as they do not harm others.}

9 WE WANT THE END OF CLASS ANTAGONISM AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

We believe that those in power cultivate elitism and class divisions among youth which only serve to weaken us. The survival of young people of all classes and races is threatened by the few who run this world. We condemn academic tracking, honors, and all other class divisions imposed upon us.

10 WE WANT THE END OF RACISM AND COLONIALISM IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD

We believe ^{the United States} America is an imperialist country. America used over 50 percent of the world's resources for less than 7 percent of the world's population. Racism in schools is severely damaging to students, particularly minority students. Students must eliminate racism and stop fighting each other. We must unite to fight the real enemy until we have education that meets the needs of all races. We support the liberation struggles of colonized people of all colors everywhere. ^{The U.S. uses} The U.S. military must be democratically controlled by the American people.

11 WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED PEOPLE

All young people in juvenile homes, training schools, detention centers, mental institutions, and other penal institutions for minors

must be set free. They did not receive a trial before a jury of their peers and the society they offended is itself criminal. Young people must never receive discriminatory treatment before the law, whether in the courtroom, going to a movie, buying alcohol, ^{drugs, quitting school} or leaving home. ~~The military draft must be abolished and the military made~~ ^{STRIKE} democratic.

12 WE WANT THE RIGHT TO BE ECONOMICALLY INDEPENDENT OF ADULTS

We believe we are entitled to work or to unemployment benefits. Child labor laws and ^{extended schooling} now force youth into the status of a dependent colony. ^{and convert (various) child labor laws now force youth into the status of a dependent colony}

13 WE WANT THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

We believe that to survive we must have clean air to breathe, pure food to eat, water fit to drink, products built to last, free medical care, and an end to population growth. Life exists in balance and harmony but greed and stupidity have now sent us disastrously out of balance with our environment and earth death seems certain. Each person must learn to live a sound ecological life and all people together must change the economic structure of the world until the needs of the earth and its people are met.

14 WE WANT TO RE-HUMANIZE EXISTENCE

We believe that to do this we must recognize and deal with the ^{(human) control networks} invisible dictatorship of technocracy, ^{and capitalism} and bureaucracy. ~~We are the~~ ^{OUT} crown of creation and we announce that it is not our destiny to become robot parts of the Great Machine. ^{future}

15 WE WANT TO DEVELOP COMMUNICATION AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE WORLD IN OUR COMMON STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND PEACE

We believe national boundaries are artificial and must inevitably be abolished. In the new world, all resources and technology must be used for the benefit of all people. ^{exploitation and domination will become part of history and human beings will be free at last to discover what is meant by a planet} Youth will make the revolution. Youth will keep it young.

Suggest that it be the policy of YC to never describe ourselves as an organization of any name which has adult ^{historical connotations} connections.