

What We Believe

If you're under 18, you probably already have a good idea of what Youth Liberation is about. It was started, in 1971, to work toward solutions to the special problems that young people face simply because of their age. But our goal is not just for young people to have more rights in society; we also want to see our society restructured into a more humane arrangement, so that young people can take pride in being a part of it.

The legal discrimination that faces young people is the most clear-cut. State laws vary slightly, but generally if you are below a certain age you cannot:

- * Leave home and live on your own without your parents' permission;
- * Decide how to spend your time — in every state except Mississippi you must go to school until a certain age;
- * See certain movies;
- * Stay out past curfew;
- * Drive a car, no matter how qualified you may be;
- * Be assured of a jury trial, even if you face the possibility of several years of imprisonment;
- * Get a job so you can be economically independent;
- * Vote for the people who make all these laws that affect you, or run for public office.

Less obvious than legal oppression, but just as frustrating, is the general attitude that we call ageism. It means many adults feel they're wiser and more capable than young people, and that they should therefore tell you what to do — "for your own

good." If you're young, ageism means that your ideas and your feelings are likely to be ignored or not taken seriously — "Oh, she'll grow out of it," or "It's just puppy love, isn't it cute?" Your parents, having "better judgement," can tell you not to see certain friends, forbid you to get certain mail, and generally run your life as they think they ought to.



Out of all this grows a forced dependence. Because you can't work, you have to depend on your parents for housing, food and spending money. Because you can't drive, and public transportation is usually a mess, you have to badger your parents for a ride. You may like things that way. But maybe you're fed up with it. If so, we want to work with you to get it changed.

Young people, though, aren't the only ones who face problems in this society. Old people, stereotyped as senile and worthless,

face many similar difficulties. So do third world people, women, gays, the poor, those who are handicapped, and many others. To solve these problems, we believe, requires two steps. First we need to study the present system so we can understand the roots of discrimination and oppression, and why so many people feel purposeless. Then, we need to redesign that system.

In fact, we are convinced that our society will *have* to be restructured before the problems we've discussed can be solved. To work only for equal rights with adults, within the present social structure, would be both unsatisfactory and unrealistic. Unsatisfactory because a 14-year-old on a hierarchically-controlled, dehumanizing assembly line is as bad off as a 44-year-old on that line. Unrealistic, because in our present society, where the young *must* be prepared for dull and alienating jobs, there is no room for the idea of free, equal, inquiring young people to become a reality.

What We Do

To work for these changes, Youth Liberation was formed. We have done organizing locally, and also have several activities to help young people in other areas who are working for the same goals.

A Youth Liberation Magazine

One of our programs is publishing *FPS: a magazine of young people's liberation*. It comes out every month with articles that discuss student and youth organizing across the country, and that analyze the oppression facing young people. You'll find articles about the family, schools, and juvenile law. One section, the CHIPS pages, con-